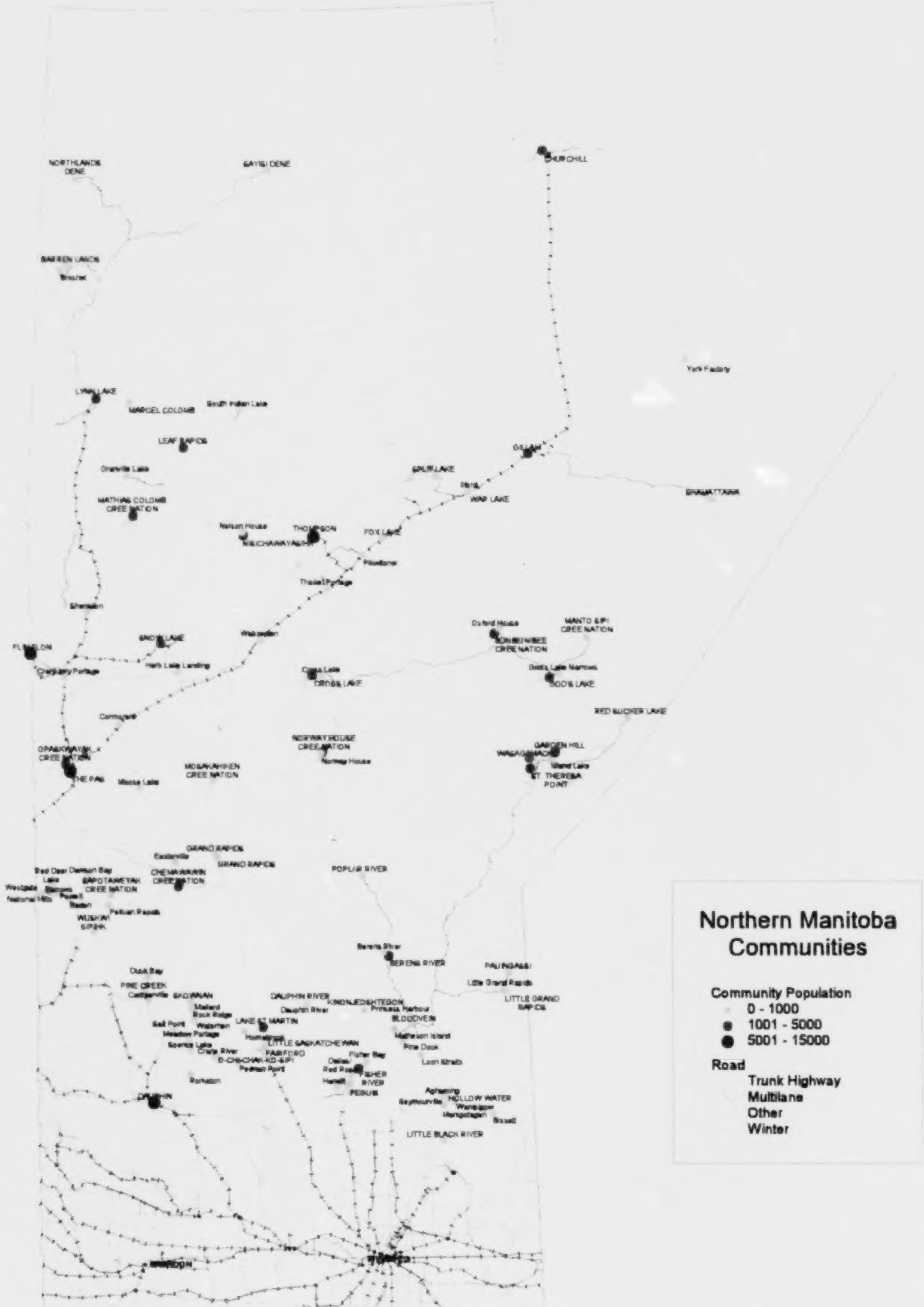
Northern Food Prices Report

2003

Exploring strategies to reduce the high cost of food in northern Manitoba

Manitoba

Building for the Future



Northern Manitoba Communities

Community Population
0 - 1000
1001 - 5000
5001 - 15000
Road
Trunk Highway
Multilane
Other
Winter
NORTHLANDS DENE
SAYISI DENE
CHURCHILL
BARREN LANDS
Brochet
York Factory
LYNN LAKE
MARCEL COLOMB
South Indian Lake
LEAF RAPIDS
GILLAM
Granville Lake
SPLIT LAKE
Ilford
WAR LAKE
SHAMATTAWA
MATHIAS COLOMB CREE NATION
Nelson House
THOMPSON
NISICHAWAYASIHK
FOX LAKE
Pikwitonei
Thicket Portage
Sherridon
Wabowden
Oxford House
BUNIBONIBEE CREE NATION
MANTO SIPI CREE NATION
FLIN FLON
SNOW LAKE
Herb Lake Landing
Cranberry Portage
Cross Lake
CROSS LAKE
Gods Lake Narrows
GOD'S LAKE
Cormorant
RED SUCKER LAKE
OPASKWAYAK CREE NATION
NORWAY HOUSE CREE NATION
Norway House
GARDEN HILL
WASAGAMACK
Island Lake
ST. THERESA POINT
THE PAS
Moose Lake
MOSAKAHIKEN CREE NATION
GRAND RAPIDS
Easterville
CHEMAWAWIN CREE NATION
POPLAR RIVER
Red Deer Lake
Dawson Bay
SAPOTAWEYAK CREE NATION
Westgate
National Mills
Pelican Rapids
WUSKWI SIPIHK
Berens River
BERENS RIVER
PAUINGASSI
Little Grand Rapids
LITTLE GRAND RAPIDS
Duck Bay
PINE CREEK
Camperville
SKOWNAN
Mallard
Rock Ridge
Waterhen
Salt Point
Meadow Portage
Spence Lake
Crane River
DAUPHIN RIVER
Dauphin River
KINONJEOSHTEGON
Princess Harbour
BLOODVEIN
LAKE ST. MARTIN
Homebrook
LITTLE SASKATCHEWAN
FAIRFORD
O-CHI-CHAK-KO-SIPI
Peonan Point
Matheson Island
Pine Dock
Loon Straits
Dallas
Red Rose
Fisher Bay
FISHER RIVER
Hamell
PEGUIS
Rorketon
DAUPHIN
Aghaming
Seymourville
HOLLOW WATER
Wanipigow
Manigotagan
Bissett
LITTLE BLACK RIVER
BRANDON
WINNIPEG

Map produced in cooperation with
IT Services Branch, Manitoba Agriculture and Food

105-00626/

Northern Food Prices Project Report

Prepared for
Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet
by
Northern Food Prices Project Steering Committee
Chair: Debora Lyall, PHEc

May 2, 2003

Executive Summary

By mandate of the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet, the Northern Food Prices Project was established and completed from July to December 2002. A group of provincial, federal and non-government northern agencies made up the inter-agency Steering Committee charged with the responsibilities for this project. They did so through a process of information gathering and stakeholder discussions.

This report completes the mandate of the Northern Food Prices Project and satisfies its purpose: to submit a report to Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet identifying strategic options to address the concern about high food prices in northern Manitoba. This concern is related to the nutritional health and food security of northern citizens. The purpose was further defined to focus on one specific aspect of the issue: strategic options that could reduce the retail price of nutritious foods to northern citizens. The focus was on nutritious foods such as milk and milk products, including infant formula and lactose-reduced products, fresh fruits and vegetables, meats, whole grains and staples.

The report describes the multi-faceted and complex issues related to the high cost of food in northern Manitoba. The report also describes the process of discovery that the Northern Food Prices Project went through in the development of possible strategic options. Seven priority strategic options are recommended by the Committee, which if implemented, have the potential to have the greatest impact on northern nutritious food prices. Other strategic options that have merit and stakeholder support are described in the report as well.

The prioritized strategic options (listed below) recommended by the Northern Food Prices Project relate to the nutritional health and food security of northerners and build on the Northern Development Strategy of feasible community and economic development.

1. *Northern Food Self-Sufficiency Initiative* – a comprehensive and long-term strategy to build local food provision activity and capacity in the north. As nutritious foods are produced, harvested, processed and marketed locally, the costs may be reduced by replacing the imported product with a local food supply.
2. *Milk Price Review in Northern Communities* – applies the current Milk Price Review program to all of Manitoba. This option also recommends a broadening of the Milk Price Review Commission's mandate to include two- and four-litre fluid milk, UHT milk, canned milk and lactose-reduced milk products.
3. *Northern Food Business Development* – focussing on existing business and community development programs, funds and services, this option encourages the development, financing and support of northern food businesses and activity.
4. *Northern Community Foods Program* – builds on the cultural tradition of sharing abundance with others. This option facilitates the sharing of successful community models of community foods programs. These include organized hunting, fishing or gathering, community food distribution, food preservation, and cultural education about using traditional foods.
5. *Northern Greenhouse Pilot Project* – will identify the types of technology and best practices related to greenhouse-type production to grow fruits and vegetables in northern Manitoba communities.
6. *Northern Gardens Initiatives* – facilitates and supports northern gardening activity. The form of gardening (individual, community, commercial, market, school or youth-based) will be determined by community identified need.
7. *Northern Food Price Survey Program* – provides credible, accurate northern food pricing information. A collaboration of northern stakeholders will design and use the food pricing, data base and reports to satisfy their information and research needs.

The Northern Food Prices Project Steering Committee is confident that through collaborative efforts, the high cost of nutritious foods can be lowered over time. This report provides Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet with an information base from which the solutions to the high cost of nutritious foods can be pursued. It is hoped that other northern stakeholders also see their role and opportunities to work towards a common goal of an affordable and accessible nutritious food supply for northern Manitoba citizens.

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Introduction

By mandate from the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet the Northern Food Prices Project was established. A Northern Food Prices Project Steering Committee completed its work over a period of six-months from July to December 2002. The purpose of the Northern Food Prices Project as stated in the Terms of Reference (Appendix A), was to submit a report to Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet identifying strategic options to address the concern about high food prices in northern Manitoba. This concern is related to the nutritional health of northerners. The purpose was further defined to provide focus to the project work and to respect the relatively short time frame of the mandate. The Steering Committee concentrated on strategic options that could reduce the retail price of nutritious foods to northern citizens such as milk and milk products, including infant formula and lactose-reduced products, fresh fruits and vegetables, meats, whole grains and staples.

The inter-agency Steering Committee was established to accomplish its task through a process of information gathering and stakeholder discussions.

This report describes the multi-faceted and complex issues related to the high cost of food in northern Manitoba. The report also describes the process of discovery that the Northern Food Prices Project Steering Committee went through in the development of possible strategic options that may reduce the retail price of food in northern Manitoba. Seven priority strategic options are recommended by the Committee, which if implemented, have the potential for the greatest impact on northern nutritious food prices.

Background

The issue of food prices in the north is a multi-faceted and complex one. These issues are explored in more detail later in this report. Public expression of concern has been expressed in various forms over time. Northerners are concerned about the high cost of nutritious foods in relation to nutrition and health. Northerners with income limitations find it difficult to purchase nutritious foods for their families. Often, the public also raises the issue of high cost of food in the north by comparing the price of milk to that of liquor, which is sold at set prices throughout the province. The Northern Food Prices Project Report attempts to speak to these concerns in its mandate to propose strategic options that can reduce the retail price of nutritious foods in the north.

In the late 1990s, a tripartite committee (Manitoba, Canada and First Nations) worked co-operatively to identify options addressing food security in northern Manitoba. This committee, the Manitoba Tripartite Working Group on the Northern Social Assistance Food Allowance produced a report entitled *Report on an Examination of Issues Related to the Social Assistance Northern Food Allowance Rate Within Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak and Other Remote Communities*, September 1998.

The work of the committee resulted in an income assistance increase for communities without all-weather access roads in April 1999. The Northern Food Prices Project builds on solutions for northern communities that go beyond the focus on income assistance programs. There is recognition that the solution to reducing the retail price of nutritious foods is complex requiring both immediate and long-term measures by a variety of partners, levels of government, the private sector and northern communities.

Context

The approaches to improving food security and nutritional health must be multi-sectoral and must address change as well as individual lifestyles. Food security refers to a condition in which all people at all times can acquire safe, nutritionally adequate and personally acceptable foods that are accessible in a manner that maintains human dignity.[1] The principles of food security are to build on capacity not charity, maximize choice and ensure cultural acceptability.[2] There are two key elements of food security: the ready availability of nutritious foods, and an assured ability to acquire personally acceptable foods. The qualifier, personally acceptable, recognizes the role food plays in meeting psychosocial as well as physiological needs.

Strategies to ensure food security range among agricultural, community development, health, social policy, employment, education, research/information, inter-sectoral collaboration and economic areas. Figure 1 of this report (page 3) is a conceptual map provided to the Northern Food Prices Project by Paul Fieldhouse, Manitoba Health. This conceptual map demonstrates how each of these strategies is inter-related and together lead to food security (entitlement) as defined in the above paragraph.

The task of the Northern Food Prices Project was to make economic strategy recommendations aimed at reducing the retail price of nutritious foods. Although it is acknowledged that food security can only be accomplished through integrated, collaborative efforts that address several strategy areas, the Northern Food Prices Project Steering Committee concentrated on strategic options that may effectively reduce the retail price of nutritious foods such as milk and milk products, including infant formula and lactose-reduced milks, fresh fruits and vegetables, meats, whole grains and staples to northern citizens.

[1] The Canadian Dietetic Association. (1991). *Hunger and Food Security in Canada: Position of the Canadian Dietetic Association.* J Can Diet Association 53:139.

[2] Houghton, J. (1999). *The Dietitians Role in British Columbia Food Security Movement.* Prince George Food Security Network.

Figure 1.
A conceptual map for promoting Nutritional health and food security in Manitoba

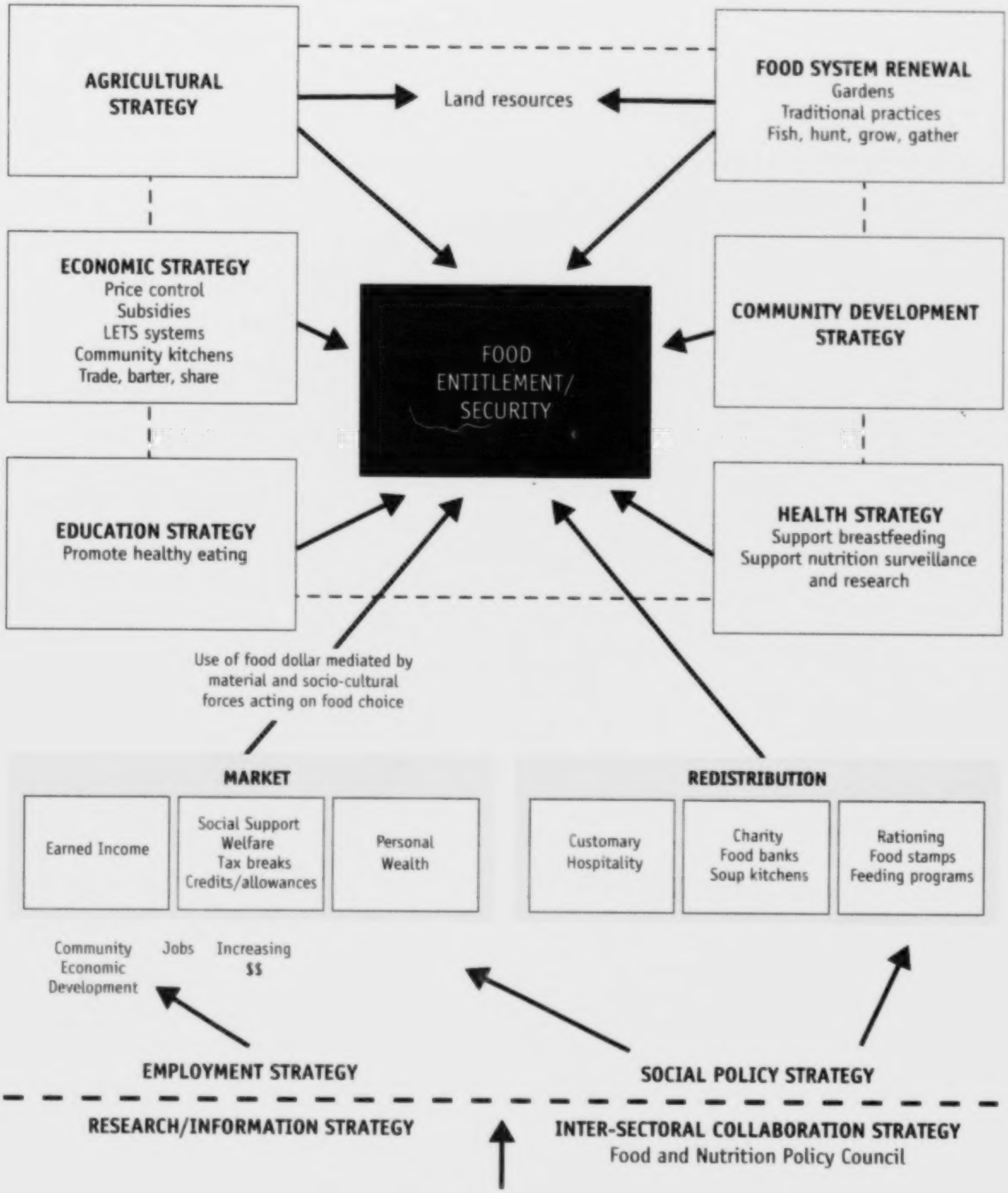
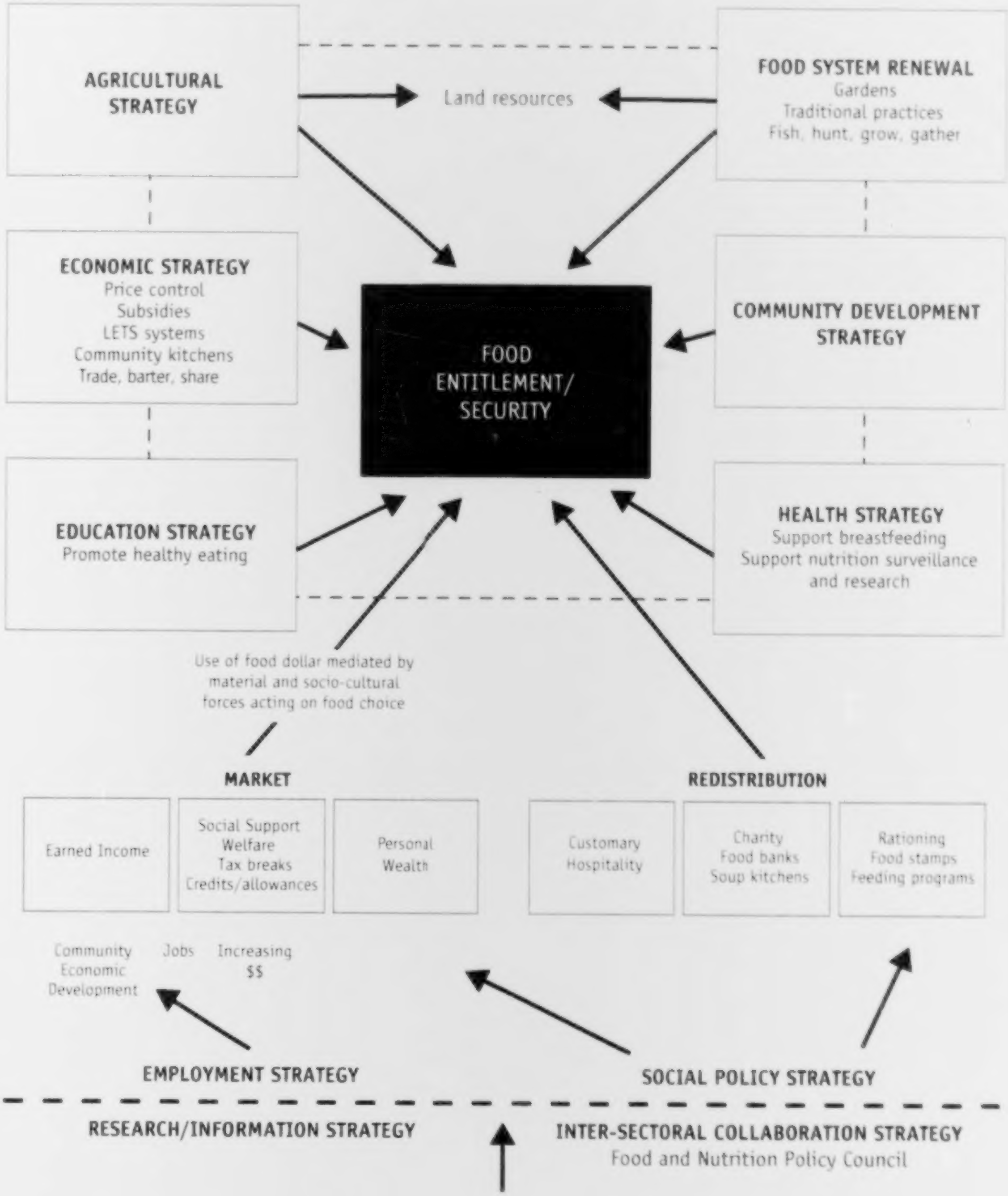

AGRICULTURAL STRATEGY
Land resources
FOOD SYSTEM RENEWAL
Gardens
Traditional practices
Fish, hunt, grow, gather
ECONOMIC STRATEGY
Price control
Subsidies
LETS systems
Community kitchens
Trade, barter, share
FOOD ENTITLEMENT/ SECURITY
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
EDUCATION STRATEGY
Promote healthy eating
HEALTH STRATEGY
Support breastfeeding
Support nutrition surveillance and research
Use of food dollar mediated by material and socio-cultural forces acting on food choice
MARKET
Earned Income
Social Support
Welfare
Tax breaks
Credits/allowances
Personal Wealth
REDISTRIBUTION
Customary Hospitality
Charity
Food banks
Soup kitchens
Rationing
Food stamps
Feeding programs
Community Economic Development
Jobs
Increasing $$
EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY
SOCIAL POLICY STRATEGY
RESEARCH/INFORMATION STRATEGY
INTER-SECTORAL COLLABORATION STRATEGY
Food and Nutrition Policy Council

Diagram is illustrative and not intended to be exhaustive.

Figure 1.
A conceptual map for promoting Nutritional health and food security in Manitoba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Project Details

Approach

The Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet, as it works towards solutions for healthy children and families, recognizes the relationship between the ability to make healthy nutritional food choices and the high cost of nutritious foods for northern citizens. Consequently, Cabinet made a decision to commit to action in March 2002.

The Northern Food Prices Project was designed and implemented through the Northern Food Prices Project Steering Committee. Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives seconded Debora Lyall, Manager of the Home Economics Section, for six-months to Chair the Project. Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs was designated as the Lead department offering Committee participation, administrative and management support and project supervision. Various provincial and federal government departments as well as interested stakeholders and northern non-governmental organizations were invited to participate on the Northern Food Prices Project Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee met weekly from July 31 to October 3, detailing the Terms of Reference (Appendix A) for the Northern Food Prices Project and completing the information gathering and fact finding component of the project. The Committee met on four additional occasions to develop the proposed strategic options for discussion with stakeholders and the recommendations for this report. With the submission of the Northern Food Prices Project Report, the Steering Committee's work is complete.

Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet holds the authority to make decisions on behalf of the provincial government as to which, if any, strategic options will be implemented and how.

Northern Development Strategy MLAs and Ministers support solutions that increase community capacity, local sustainability and address nutrition, social and economic wellness in northern Manitoba and are keenly interested in the results of the Northern Food Prices Project. The Northern Development Strategy Ministers and Members of the Legislature provided direction.

Steering Committee Participation

Invitations were sent to appropriate provincial and federal government departments to participate on the Northern Food Prices Project Steering Committee. By recommendation from the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, First Nation representation included Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO), Keewatin Tribal Council (KTC) and South East Resource Development Corporation (SERDC). Dr. Marian Campbell, retired professor from the Faculty of Human Ecology, was invited and attended as a follow-up to her previous research and interest in northern food security. Manitoba Metis Federation and the Northern Association of Community Councils were invited to participate in the decision-making process and joined the Steering Committee in addition to participating in the stakeholder feedback component of the project. Representatives attended meetings, as they were available. Some participated by tele-conference.

Committee representation included:

Allec, Robert
Senior Negotiator/Policy Analyst
Manitoba Region
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

Beardy, Jim
Social Development Advisor
Keewatin Tribal Council

Betker, Jeff
Nault, Anna
Policy Analysts
Manitoba Metis Federation

Campbell, Dr. Marian
Private Consultant and Researcher

Constant, Louisa
Social Services Advisor
Gardiner, Laurel
Building Sustainable Workforces Project
Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak

Doak, Grant
Executive Director
Policy and Planning
White, Judy
Policy Analyst
Program and Policy Services
Manitoba Family Services and Housing

Fontaine, Janet
Project Manager
Community and Economic Development
Committee of Cabinet

Gudmundson, Brian
Senior Policy Analyst
Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs

Irvine, Ray
Analyst
Program Planning and Development
Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs

Keeper, Kitty
Social Services Co-ordinator
South East Resource
Development Corporation

Lacquette, Anne/Lacquette, Norman
Western Regional Chairperson
Meade, Reg/McIvor, Francis
President/Northern Regional Chairperson
Northern Affairs Community Council

Lyall, Debora
Chair
Northern Food Prices Project
Co-ordinator
Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives/
Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs

MacMartin, Joyce
Co-ordinator
Program and Policy Services
Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth

McQuillen, Kelly
Manager
Diabetes and Chronic Diseases Unit
Manitoba Health

Russell, Susan
Manager
Nutrition, Diabetes and Wellness Unit
First Nations and Inuit Health Branch,
Health Canada

Storey, Judy
Food Marketing Officer
Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives

Parameters and Key Issues

Within the time line of six months to complete the analysis, consultation and development of strategic options, the Northern Food Prices Project was directed by Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet to focus on one specific component related to high food costs in the north. The focus for the recommended strategic options was to work towards a reduction in the retail price of nutritious foods such as milk and milk products, including infant formula and lactose-reduced products, fresh fruits and vegetables, meat, whole grains and staples to northern citizens.

In relation to how/why the food is priced, the Committee investigated the following topics/ issues:

- Demographics and diversity of northern communities
- Access to communities by all-weather road, winter road, ferry, barge, rail, air and by other potential transportation systems such as airships
- Freight costs in relation to retail prices
- The Food Mail Program (federal freight subsidy program)
- Types of food stores and their cost of doing business in the north
- The effect of food retail competition in the northern communities
- The effect of food distribution systems, warehousing systems and volume of sales on the retail price of nutritious food
- Self-sufficiency in food production, processing, marketing and retailing by northern citizens
- Building community capacity and economic development for food self-sufficiency
- Taxation/regulation issues related to the delivery and/or sale of food in the north
- Options for youth both in the school system and youth programs for employment, business development and leadership skill development within the food system
- Nutrition and health issues related to nutritious food costs and supports to community health workers
- Food consumption patterns and choices
- Identification of indigenous food supplies

Strategic options have been developed that are intended to result in nutritious foods being offered for sale at a price lower than current practise. It was the intention of the project to find options that would benefit all northern people including, but not limited to, income assistance clients.

Findings

Information Gathering and Fact Finding

Over 50 people shared their expertise and information with the Northern Food Prices Project Steering Committee. This was accomplished through a variety of methods. At each Steering Committee meeting three to four in-person presentations were made which included written and presentation materials.

In addition, the Chair completed 14 in-person and telephone interviews and submitted written notes to the Steering Committee. These interviews contributed to the knowledge and understanding of the issues. A bibliography of all the materials gathered is found in Appendix B. All materials have been organized and retained in the Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat library. The materials can be accessed by contacting Tanis Mulder at 945-2510. The key points regarding each issue studied are as follows:

- **Demographics and diversity of northern communities**

  For the purpose of the Northern Food Prices Project, 'Northern' corresponds to the boundary used by Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs. The mix of communities includes:

  - Those governed by First Nations, larger Municipal Corporations, and smaller communities that are members of Northern Association of Community Councils.
  - Community size ranging from a population of five to 14,385.
  - Communities with all-weather road access; communities with winter road

access which is supplemented by air, ferry, barge or rail service; communities with rail service only.

- Northern Manitoba spans a land mass from approximately the 52nd parallel to the 60th parallel and makes up approximately 82 per cent of the province with just over 80,000 people in total.

The following statistics further describe the targeted communities:

Total Population	80,429
Population of Flin Flon, The Pas and Thompson	25,051 (31%)
Population excluding Flin Flon, The Pas and Thompson	55,378 (69%)
Per cent of population living in 18 communities of over 1,000 people	66%
Average size of smaller communities	336
Number of communities	98
- First Nation communities	39
- NACC communities	50
- Municipal Corporations	9
Number of communities without all-weather road access	31

The Northern Food Prices Project produced a Northern Manitoba Communities map, which shows all the northern and First Nation communities and their comparative size (Appendix C). An internet format of this map also shows the road and air transportation systems as well as the school and food retail outlets. For more information about the Northern Manitoba Communities map contact Brian Gudmundson at bgudmundso@gov.mb.ca.

Drawing from a number of information sources, the Northern Food Prices Project also produced a Northern Communities Chart showing these same descriptors plus additional information related to social assistance rates, trucking companies and more specific information about roads and air strips (Appendix D). This Northern Communities Chart is available in Excel and can be updated as needed. Contact Brian Gudmundson at bgudmundso@gov.mb.ca.

- **Access to communities by road, winter road, ferry, barge, rail, air and by other potential transportation systems such as airships; and freight costs in relation to the retail price**

The issue of access is directly related to freight costs charged to ship nutritious foods into communities. Generally speaking, in more remote communities, there are higher freight costs contributing to higher food costs.

Decisions related to transportation access to remote communities are complex, long-term and require substantial funding from both the provincial and federal governments. This report does not attempt to recommend a specific action for the province to take with regards to winter roads. However, it is important to note that there is a direct relationship between road access to a community and lower costs for nutritious foods. In communities that have all-weather road access, the freight costs, the cost of doing business and therefore food prices are relatively competitive with southern food retailers. In addition, all-weather road access allows residents to drive to nearby centres that offer even lower prices and sales.

Food retailers and trucking companies serving northern communities concur with analysis by Manitoba Transportation and Government Services that there is food freight cost savings to communities when all-weather roads become available. The following data from North West Company shows their freight costs as a per cent of their sales.

	Road Stores	Fly-In Remote Stores
Grocery	3.3%	12.4%
Beverages	8.3%	25.6%
Meats	2.7%	11.8%
Dairy	6.6%	27.9%
Produce	6.5%	24.0%
Frozen	2.6%	13.0%
Average	3.3%	12.5%

The industry average for freight costs is 3.2 per cent and this compares to an average freight cost of a North West Company Northern Road Store of 3.3 per cent and a Northern Fly-In Remote Store of 12.5 per cent.

Gardewine North is one of the principle trucking companies that ships food to northern communities. In their presentation to the Steering Committee, it was clear that when winter roads are open, there are large volumes of largely non-perishable products shipped over a short period of time into the communities. This transportation method is used to avoid the higher cost air freight services. However, truck freight costs are still high over winter roads due to wear and tear on the trucks, higher employee costs, equipment losses, unpredictable weather, less than a truck load (LTL) requirements and reduced back haul opportunities.

Frequency of barge and ferry service also affects freight costs, especially for perishable nutritious foods that need to be shipped into the community on a regular basis. Ferry service, at least weekly, allows food retailers to ship perishables in at the lower freight costs rather than having to use the higher cost of air freight.

Improvements to air strips and air service also impact on the retail price of foods in the north. Air freight is the most costly way to ship foods into communities. The air freight cost (at road end) is as much as 65-70 per cent of the total freight cost to a retailer who has no other option than to fly-in the goods. The necessity to use freezer blankets adds to the cost of sending perishables by air because there is no air temperature control while on the plane or when the foods are unloaded and transported to the retail outlet. Despite such efforts, the quality of perishable foods is often less than desirable and can result in wastage costs to the retailer when the product cannot be sold.

Food is freighted by rail to Churchill and the Bay Line communities. A recent policy by the rail company to charge individual passengers additional freight costs for groceries purchased in Thompson has added significantly to the cost of food for these citizens.

Mathias Colomb Cree Nation (Pukatawagan) and Lynn Lake are also served by rail and do not have road access. No refrigerated containers for this service adds to the difficulty and cost of delivering quality perishable foods. In addition, a proposal has been submitted to eliminate this rail service. Should this occur, retail food prices could be expected to rise in Mathias Colomb Cree Nation (Pukatawagan), Sherridon and Lynn Lake.

Manitoba is currently investigating the potential of an airship industry. The use of airships (dirigibles) could possibly provide a lower freight cost in comparison to fixed wing. It is possible that airships could provide an alternative shipping system to winter roads for isolated communities. The airship industry in Manitoba does not currently exist and the actual costs are not known. However, there is potential requiring further consideration. To support this end, provincial and federal governments, industry and the Transport Institute held international airships conferences in Winnipeg in October 2002 and 2003. For further information, contact Dr. Barry Prentice, Transport Institute at 274-9766.

- **The Food Mail program (federal freight subsidy program)**

The federal Northern Air Stage Program is commonly known as the Food Mail Program. It has been in operation for 30 years and is Canada's transportation subsidy to isolated northern communities for nutritious foods. There is an air transportation subsidy program for perishable foods in Labrador, funded by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador that supplements the Food Mail Program in some communities. All isolated communities are eligible to use the Food Mail freight subsidy. Food Mail's definition of isolated is any community that does not have year-round road or rail access.

Currently, Food Mail is not being utilized in Manitoba. It is understood that Manitoba customers do not currently use the Food Mail Program because they can negotiate relatively competitive rates with Manitoba freight carriers. Wholesalers and retailers also indicate that Food Mail restrictions make using the program complicated. For example, the perishable foods that are subsidized must be shipped separately from ineligible foods and non-perishables.

Food Mail Eligibility and Use

Canada	
# eligible (provinces/territories)	9 (6/3)
# eligible communities	140
population of eligible communities	90,000
Canada	
# province/territories using Food Mail	7 (4/3)
# communities using Food Mail	60
population of communities using Food Mail	46,000
Manitoba	
# eligible communities	19
population of eligible communities	17,000
# communities using Food Mail	0

The following Manitoba communities are eligible to participate in the Food Mail Program:

Gods River
Gods Lake Narrows
Oxford House
Red Sucker Lake
Island Lake (Gardenhill)
Waasagomach
St. Theresa Point
Negginan (Poplar River)
Berens River
Little Grand Rapids
Shamattawa
York Landing
South Indian Lake
Tadoule Lake
Brochet
Lac Brochet
Granville Lake
Pauingassi
Pukatawagan

The Food Mail Program is a partnership with three federal agencies:

Canada Post

- Provides the Food Mail service to eligible destinations at least once a week
- Negotiates contracts with air carriers to deliver the food products and verifies shipments
- Collects the postage charge from the customer
- Submits quarterly reports to INAC

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

- Sets program policy, eligibility, rate structure and points of mailing
- Obtains program funding
- Makes payments to Canada Post
- Monitors the impact on food prices, food consumption and nutrition
- Provides public information and consultation

Health Canada

- Provides nutrition advice and guidance on program administration
- Provides funding for and collaboration in implementing pilot projects

Customers who are eligible to use the Food Mail Program to ship nutritious foods into the eligible isolated communities are businesses in the south that have a Food Mail account with Canada Post. Shipments can be made to individuals in the north, but the shipment must be made by businesses with the Canada Post account. The customer has a contractual agreement with Canada Post and pays only the subsidized freight rate and not the actual freight cost. Since 1993, the Food Mail freight rate for perishable foods has been set at $0.80/kg plus $0.75 per parcel. Food Mail funding covers the remaining costs to Canada Post for the shipping.

The list of perishable foods that qualify for the Food Mail Program include:

- Fruit – fresh, frozen; Juice – fresh, frozen, boxes
- Vegetables – fresh, frozen
- Milk products – excluding canned
- Bread and unsweetened bakery products

- Meat, fish, poultry – fresh, frozen (excludes fried chicken and other products that are breaded, battered or in pastry)
- Eggs
- Margarine
- Infant foods
- Some semi-perishable foods (e.g., nuts, peanut butter, cook-type cereals, salad dressing, mayonnaise)
- Frozen combination foods (e.g., pizza, frozen dinners)

The 18-Month Food Mail Pilot Project

Over the past year, pilot projects involving a lower postage rate for certain foods and some additional complementary measures have been initiated. At the time of this report two pilot projects were underway in Kugaaruk, Nunavut and Kangiqsujuaq, Quebec. In addition, a third pilot begins in Fort Severn, Ontario on January 1, 2003, although there has not yet been an official announcement of this program. This is the first pilot project in a First Nation community. There is some indication that food prices are lower and there has been an increased use of nutritious foods in the Quebec pilot where there is a very co-operative food retailer involved. Components of the pilot project include:

- Postage rate reduction of $.50/kg for priority perishable foods for 18 months in pilot communities (i.e., priority perishable foods are shipped at a cost to the customer of $.30/kg plus $.75 per parcel)
- Retail promotion of healthy foods
- Nutrition education for consumers to increase the awareness of new foods and to influence food choice in the direction of nutritious foods
- Research and evaluation:
  - price and quality monitoring
  - nutrition and food security surveys
  - data from Canada Post on volumes of shipments
  - data from retailers on sales and/or shipments and losses
  - focus groups/community meetings/ local advisory group
- Oral and written reports for the community
- The list of Priority Perishable Foods that are shipped at a rate of $.30/kg, plus $.75 per parcel include:
  - Fresh milk (excluding chocolate milk), UHT milk, buttermilk, cheese, processed cheese, cottage cheese, yogurt, yogurt drinks, powdered milk
  - Fresh vegetables; frozen vegetables, excluding french fries and similar potato products
  - Fruit – fresh, frozen; frozen juice concentrate
  - Eggs
- Should Manitoba request a pilot project, there is an expectation that the province would contribute financially. This contribution could be towards the nutrition and food security surveys and by providing the community nutrition education component of the pilot.
- There is no assurance that federal funding required to support a pilot project in Manitoba would be available.

Currently, INAC expends more for the Food Mail Program than is designated in their annual budget because of the demand and volumes for the program. In 2001-2002 the total expenditure on this program was $25.1 M. The December 2002 Auditor General of Canada's Report indicates that "Indian and Northern Affairs Canada should undertake a review of the location of its major entry points. Such a review should focus on whether the existing points are the most effective in terms of contributing to the overall levels of nutrition in the north. That review would look not only at the financial costs and benefits associated with existing and alternative locations, but also the less tangible, but equally important issues such as quality, freshness, variety of foods and how long it would take to deliver the food items from entry points located farther south." Churchill is an entry point for service to the Kivalliq region of Nunavut. Loss of business to Churchill would have a significant economic impact on that community.

The points of entry for Food Mail in Manitoba are Winnipeg, Thompson and Lynne Lake.

- **Types of food stores and their cost of doing business in the north; and the effect of food distribution systems, warehousing systems and volume of sales on the retail price of nutritious food**

There are a variety of food stores serving northern Manitoba. This information is included in the Northern Communities Chart found in Appendix D.

The major food retailer is the North West Company (NWC) with 30 stores known as the Northern Store in Manitoba. NWC operates 150 stores across northern Canada and 25 in Alaska with their headquarters in Winnipeg. Northcan Food Distribution Centre is responsible for providing the stores with all their groceries and Crescent Multi-Foods is the wholesale supplier of fresh produce.

Safeway, IGA and Federated Co-ops also do business in larger communities and have large wholesale and distribution systems supporting the business.

There is one co-op store at Mathias Colomb Cree Nation (Pukatawagan) that is a member of Arctic Co-Ops Ltd. In addition, there are a number of independent stores and/or Band Council owned stores. In some communities, there may only be a small convenience store selling food and in some small communities (more than 24), there is no food store.

Volume of sales is a key factor determining the retailer's per unit cost of food. A greater volume of sales can result in a lower per unit cost for food items. An independent store, and therefore the customer in a small community, must pay a higher price when less than a standard 'case' is ordered and delivered. Freight charges are also higher when there is insufficient volume and the trucking company must bring in 'less than a truck load' (LTL). Therefore, increasing the volume of sales by encouraging the purchase of nutritious foods, wherever possible, can help to reduce the price of those nutritious foods.

The North West Company identified several other costs of doing business in the north that are higher than in the south.

- Warehousing for cold and heated storage and all associated costs (heat, light, staff, handling costs, construction) are required in remote areas to take advantage of lower winter road freight rates (lower than air freight).
- Finance costs for carrying large quantities of inventory over a long period of time adds to the cost of goods.
- Small market sizes of some communities increase per unit cost for each item.
- Travel of support staff from Head Office to and from stores and transfers of employees between stores are costly. Maintenance and repair costs are inflated by travel and waiting time spent by repair persons and also by the added cost of travel in the north. For example, a typical repair bill for a failed produce case compressor in Shamattawa is $2,155. In Winnipeg, the cost is $155.
- The down time of failed heating or refrigeration equipment adds to the rate of spoilage and damage, lost sales and higher costs.
- Less frequent deliveries and the time, distance and frequent handling in the delivery of perishables into the north increases the rate of spoilage and damage, lost sales and higher costs.
- Other examples of the high cost of doing business in more isolated northern communities include higher building construction costs, rental costs, utilities and other occupancy costs.

In addition, Arctic Coops Ltd. identified that the cost of employees and staff turnover and training add significantly to the cost of doing business in the north. Another example comes from the Gardenhill convenience store that paid a $9,000 cost to repair two doors that were vandalized.

- **The effect of food retail competition in the northern communities**

Outside the three major centres of Flin Flon, The Pas and Thompson which have fairly large and more than one food/grocery store approximately 20 other communities have more than one food retailer offering some competition in food prices in those communities. Competition helps to sustain lower prices for the customer. Small market size is a limitation to increased competition. It is not known which northern communities might be able to sustain an additional food retailer without putting the existing local food retailer out of business.

Competition also comes from nearby larger centres. This is called outshopping. Many families choose to drive or fly to the larger communities such as Flin Flon, Thompson and The Pas, where significantly lower prices are available.

Surprisingly, southern-based food retailers also compete for the northerners' food dollar. Companies such as Wal-Mart will ship non-perishable foods, C.O.D. to customers in the north.

- **Self-sufficiency in food production, processing, marketing, and/or retailing food by northern citizens**

As late as the 1950s, northern communities were relatively self-sufficient, except for flour, sugar and similar products. It was not uncommon to have had market gardens, canning and other locally produced foods. Some communities continue to have a measure of self-sufficiency. Wherever possible, these have been identified and described as examples to use in helping other communities to become more self-sufficient in their food supply.

Wherever practical and sustainable, producing, processing and marketing food locally can reduce the freight and other costs of shipping these foods into the community. Building food-based businesses and activity must be done on a community-by-community basis since transportation to even nearby communities can be extremely high. However, there may be some natural groupings of communities that can work together and do some inter-community sharing and/or trade.

- **Building community capacity and economic development**

Solutions to reduce the retail price of foods in northern communities over the long term is closely linked to community and economic development. Self-sufficiency and breaking the dependency on the south for at least some of its food supply, can build self-esteem and confidence as well as economic development.

A community must analyze its own capacity to engage in food self-sufficiency initiatives by looking at the knowledge, skills, resources and will available in the community. Any new initiative to help reduce the cost of food in a community must be owned and supported by the community to be successful.

Community Asset Mapping is a process by which a community analyzes its own capacity to initiate change and undertake new initiatives. In this people-centred approach to community development, the individual and community knowledge, skills, resources and will are identified and collected. A community asset mapping survey and analysis tool could be developed to focus on a community's capacity to produce, process, market and retail food.

This type of analysis is a critical first step in not only shaping the design of an initiative but also in adapting implementation plans to unique community characteristics. It defines community and individual strengths as well as potential problem areas. The profile includes:

- A community image of itself and its goals
- Its past history and recent changes
- Its current resources, readiness and capacity for local food provision

The process of community asset mapping can also provide a unique opportunity for citizen involvement. Through involvement in the study process, citizens and organizations can develop awareness and ownership of an initiative and build commitment to local action. It is also important in establishing plans that have the greatest chance of success and not set a project up for failure, which can be devastating to a community.

Several community asset mapping resources are referenced in the Bibliography of Materials (Appendix B). These include materials from *Community Building Resources – Aim High internet site; The Asset-Based Community Development Institute, Northwestern University; and text by Chris Rissel and Neil Bracht.*

Community asset mapping has been incorporated into many of the strategic options described in this report. This approach also respects the principles articulated in the Province's CED Lens (Community and Economic Development Lens) initiative. The Manitoba government is committed to supporting CED by assisting communities to meet the following five main CED goals:

1. Building greater community capacity
2. Nurturing individual and community pride, self-reliance and leadership
3. Enhancing knowledge and skills
4. Developing businesses that are responsive to social, economic and environmental needs
5. Fostering balanced, equitable and sustainable economic development

- **Taxation/regulation issues related to the delivery and/or sale of food in the north**

  It is possible that retail food prices could be lowered through government (provincial or federal) intervention. Currently, there is a Northern Residents Deduction that can reduce personal income tax payable for citizens living in northern communities. As well, the income assistance rate for clients in isolated communities is 20 per cent higher than Manitoba rates. Several employers provide a northern living allowance to help offset the higher costs of living in the north.

  There is no PST or GST charged on nutritious foods but there is GST charged on freight service. The provincial government may wish to lobby the federal government to have air freight into isolated communities exempt from GST.

  Perhaps there is merit in having a freight rate rebate available for food companies who must fly perishable nutritious foods into isolated communities. Another option might be to offer a fuel tax rebate, similar to the one currently available for northern off-road mining activity.

  The Northern Food Prices Project did not investigate in detail the possibilities in this area since it is complex and difficult to design an effective subsidy and to estimate cost to government. It is also challenging to ensure that such actions taken by government will actually result in lower food prices for the customer.

- **Options for youth both in the school system and youth programs**

  It is generally acknowledged that the involvement of youth in any options related to food self-sufficiency is critical. Reaching youth with nutrition programs will help to change consumption patterns and help increase the volume of sales of nutritious foods locally. Food business ventures and food production options need to have a youth education, training, employment and career development component. This helps to build community capacity, ensures the transition of businesses to the next generation and helps to deal with youth vandalism and unemployment.

  Schools in the community are an important partner and need to be included in community solutions for high food costs. Frontier School Division is implementing a Healthy Food Policy that requires community support and can be integrated into community solutions related to consumption patterns, food choices and high food costs. The Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre provides programming and service support to First Nation schools and can be asked to help reach these schools with youth business and leadership initiatives.

  The 4-H program and Junior Achievement are two youth leadership and business programs that are currently funded by government. Where these youth programs are known, they are considered to be quality desirable programs that could benefit northern youth.

- **Nutrition and health issues related to nutritious food**

  Healthy Child Manitoba implemented the Northern Food Prices Project because of the perceived impact of high food prices on the nutritional health of northern Manitobans. One of the major health issues related to nutritional health is diabetes. In June 1996, the Minister of Health declared diabetes to be both a major public health issue and an epidemic among Aboriginal people and the elderly of all populations. Evidence from the *Diabetes Burden of Illness Study*[3] indicated that:

[3] Manitoba Health, *Diabetes: A Manitoba Strategy*, 1998.

- There are now more than 55,000 people in Manitoba who have been diagnosed with diabetes.
- 13 per cent of people over 55 and 15 per cent of people over 65 years have been diagnosed with diabetes.
- More than 20 per cent of Status women and 13 per cent of Status men over the age of 25 have been diagnosed with diabetes. Most Status adults with diabetes are less than 45 years old, whereas in the general population, most adults with diabetes are over 55 years of age.
- The diabetes prevalence rate for Status people is 18.9 per cent verses 4.5 per cent for non-Aboriginal people (all ages).
- Population projections for Status people suggest that the prevalence of diabetes will triple by the year 2016. There is no evidence that diabetes occurred among Aboriginal people in Canada before 1940.
- Aboriginal people with diabetes have very high rates of complications of the disease. For example, in First Nations population, persons with diabetes account for:
  - 91 per cent of lower limb amputations
  - 60 per cent of hospitalizations for heart disease
  - 50 per cent of hospitalizations for stroke
  - 41 per cent of hospital days, and
  - 30 per cent of hospitalizations.
- By 1996, there were 43 Aboriginal children under 18 years of age with Type 2 diabetes. This is an alarming statistic, particularly when it is estimated that the actual number of affected Aboriginal children may be three times higher. This is a new disease in children and has been noticed to date in Aboriginal children only, and predominantly in Aboriginal girls.

Manitoba is implementing a *Manitoba Diabetes Strategy*[3] and is currently working on the development of provincial nutrition and healthy schools strategies. These strategies are needed to provide focussed programming. Such programs can help minimize the impact of diabetes on their health and life as well as have a major impact on long-term health and disease prevention.

Manitoba First Nations Diabetes Strategy: A Call to Action[4] was developed by representatives from First Nation communities and tribal councils at the request of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. This document was created to assist First Nation communities in developing community-based diabetes implementation plans and initiatives.

Diabetes Among Aboriginal People in Canada: The Evidence[5] provides a national perspective to the disease and its impact on Aboriginal people. Some additional facts include:

- Rates of diabetes appear to be higher on-reserve than off-reserve.
- Although much less is known about diabetes among Metis people, results from the Aboriginal Peoples Survey show rates well above the non-Aboriginal average.
- Metis people have diabetes prevalence rates higher than that reported among First Nations living off-reserve.
- Data available for some First Nations indicate a high prevalence of complications such as heart disease, hypertension, stoke, lower limb amputations, kidney disease and eye disease.

The Northern Food Prices Project has incorporated nutrition education and awareness into each of its strategic options. By doing so, health and nutrition educators are given new tools to use in reaching northerners with healthy food messages. However, jurisdic tional barriers were frequently identified when trying to reach both Status and non-Status people. The Romanow Report, "The Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada"[6] recognized the serious health and nutrition issues for Aboriginal people. This report indicated that funding should be pooled and that Aboriginal Health Partnerships be established. The partnership and joint-funding approach with the province, Canada, non-government agencies and industry is also built into each of the Northern Food Prices Project's recommended options.

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[4] Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, The Manitoba First Nations Diabetes Strategy: "A Call to Action," August 1999.

[5] Health Canada, *Diabetes Among Aboriginal People in Canada: The Evidence*, March 2000.

[6] Brain Gudmundson, *Summary of Romanow Report – Aboriginal Recommendations: The Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada*, 2002.

- **Consumption patterns and choices**

Lactose intolerance is of concern with northern Aboriginal citizens. Many Aboriginal people experience a sensitivity to the lactose in fluid milk. This presents challenges for the individual, the family as well as nutrition and health professionals. In addition, many Aboriginal people do not see the consumption of milk as important to their traditional eating habits.

In seeking statistical information, it was discovered there are no Canadian or Manitoba statistics describing the incidence or degree of lactose intolerance. Recent research indicates the majority of people who have a sensitivity to lactose, have the ability to adapt to small amounts of milk taken with food. Milk products such as cheese and yogurt can be consumed because the bacteria used to produce these foods break down the lactose.

Many perishable nutritious foods are seasonal and sometimes not available in local food stores. This is of particular concern in communities served by winter roads and especially at times when weather limits the use of winter roads to these isolated communities.

There are times when the quality of nutritious perishable foods is poor and at the same time high in price. This discourages consumers from purchasing and consuming these products.

Access to credit for food purchases often builds a loyalty/dependency on the food retailer and can provide both a benefit and a disadvantage to the retail price of foods for a consumer.

The North West Company understands many of its customers to be brand loyal, despite comparative lower prices of other brands.

Fresh fluid milk can be the most costly form of milk delivered to more remote communities. The acceptance and use of other forms of milk is unique to each community. Canned milk is well used by most northern citizens. Ultra High Temperature (UHT) milk can be a good alternative to fresh fluid milk since UHT milk does not require refrigeration until it is opened and has a longer shelf life. UHT and powdered milk can be and are available in most northern communities, depending on consumer choice. Nutrition education and awareness campaigns and taste testing can affect consumer choice. When these milk alternatives are cheaper than fluid fresh milk, these education and awareness campaign can assist consumers to reduce the cost of milk for the family.

Many northern families have access to wild game and fish to augment their meat and meat products intake. The North West Company indicates that, in addition to this practise, their customers purchase meats from the store at a rate similar to most Canadians.

By using a community-based approach, Frontier School Division designed and is implementing a new Healthy Foods Policy in all of its 40 schools. This policy dictates that any food-related activity organized under the school's authority must follow the policy in using nutritious foods. The policy covers school parties, fundraisers, lunch/breakfast/snack programs, vending machines, etc. Continued community support is needed to make the policy successful and to contribute to the long-term health of northern citizens.

It is important that schools and food retailers partner in this effort to increase the consumption of nutritious foods. Increased consumption leads to increased volume of sales and therefore lower retail prices for all citizens in the community.

The province of Manitoba is developing a similar strategy for all schools and should be encouraged with the same message where retail food prices are an issue of concern.

- **Identification of food alternatives and indigenous food supplies**

The question was raised, and not well answered by the Northern Food Prices Project, as to what the traditional calcium food was for indigenous and northern people prior to the promotion of milk in a healthy diet. Part of the answer was breastfeeding for infants and possibly a traditional tea for adults. Further research on this topic may lead to a lower cost nutritional replacement for milk in the northern adult diet.

Traditional hunting, gathering, and fishing remains an important food source for many northerners. Country/wild foods may be available near some communities to provide more of the nutritional requirements of northern citizens. Use of native wild life and plant species must be done within sustainable levels. Decisions in this area are complex and require a co-operative and fact-based approach amongst all users.

For example, Manitoba Conservation studies indicate that the province's moose and caribou populations are at maximum sustainable use at this time. There are opportunities for increased harvest of wild geese in the Churchill area. Elk and deer are not abundant in most northern communities where the land does not sustain animals that graze on grasses.

There are opportunities in some locations for an increased harvest of fish. However, the commercial and lodge industries compete for fishing rights with local citizens. Also, if the community is not located on a lake with an abundance of fish to harvest, citizens who do not have access to boats and equipment can not easily provide fish for their family.

The Northern Forest Diversification Centre (NFDC) works with individual entrepreneurs to start micro-businesses. NFDC has information and protocols for the sustainable use of non-timbre forest products such as wild mushrooms, mint, Labrador tea, other teas, cranberries, etc.

Stakeholder Feedback

The Northern Food Prices Project recognized the importance of obtaining input from a wide range of northern stakeholders to formulate the recommendations in its report. Two methods of inviting stakeholder response proved to be successful:

1. Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Deputy Minister Harvey Bostrom's letter of invitation to northern organizations to be involved in the Information Sharing and Exchange Sessions was received with quick responses requesting involvement.
2. Northern Food Prices Project Co-ordinator, Debora Lyall, contacted various organizations directly and made arrangements to participate in one of the group's upcoming meetings.

Information Sharing and Exchange Sessions were held with 25 stakeholder agencies reaching 354 people in total. These sessions were informal and interactive and were planned around each organization's existing meeting schedule.

Feedback was received from the following groups:

Aboriginal Leadership and Organizations

- Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak
- South East Resource Development Corporation
- Keewatin Tribal Council
- Swampy Cree Tribal Council
- Manitoba Metis Federation
- Chief and community workers with Bloodvein First Nation
- Kathi Avery Kinew and Keely Tenfingers (AMC)

Municipal/Regional Leadership Organizations

- Northern Association of Community Councils
- Northern Municipal Corporation members of Association of Manitoba Municipalities
- Burntwood and Norman RHA dietitians and community health workers

Provincial Government Agencies

- Northern Development Strategy Ministers
- Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives staff work groups – Home Economics Section, Animal Industry Branch, Boards and Commissions, 4-H Program Team
- Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs work groups – Local Government Development Management, Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat work group
- Healthy Child Manitoba work group
- Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs
- Manitoba Finance
- Manitoba Women's Directorate

Federal Government Agencies

- Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

Industry

- North West Company
- Thompson, Flin Flon and The Pas Chambers of Commerce
- Manitoba Milk Producers
- Food retailers in Flin Flon (2) and Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation (1)
- Northern Forest Diversification Centre

A discussion document of 17 possible strategic options was drafted and used as the base for discussion and feedback during the Information Sharing and Exchange Sessions. The purpose of the stakeholder sessions was to gain direct feedback about the workability, suitability and possible improvements to the strategic options that were being investigated.

Also, new ideas were gathered directly from northern citizens that had not been discussed by the Steering Committee. Data from the Information Sharing and Exchange Sessions were gathered during the actual meeting as well as from written, mail-in Feedback Forms (9 received).

Many of the suggestions and ideas expressed during stakeholder discussions sessions have been incorporated into the proposed strategic options and are reflected in the report's recommendations.

Individual stakeholders made a number of additional suggestions. These can be found in Appendix E with explanations as to why these suggestions were not developed into proposed strategic options.

Analysis

To test the viability of possible strategic options, and to encourage feedback from northern stakeholders and partnering agencies, 17 strategic options were developed and summarized.

The strategic options were grouped into three different categories:

A. *Local Food Provision* – Strategic options focus on a community development approach to growing and/or producing foods locally. These are long-term approaches to reducing the price of food in northern communities. This would be accomplished by producing or making foods locally at a lower cost than it takes to freight in these same foods.

B. *Systems Factors* – Strategic options focus on actions that the provincial or federal government could take using existing programs, regulations or taxation.

C. *Consumer Rebate or Incentive* – Strategic options suggest a subsidy or incentive for northern customers to purchase nutritious foods.

The following is a summary of the 17 proposed Strategic Options:

A. – Local Food Provision

In all of the suggested options, the decision to participate would be made by each community, its leaders, champions and interested partners.

The detailed description of each option is referenced in Appendix F.

** Note: In the Recommendations section of this report, the Northern Food Self-Sufficiency Re-Discovery Project and the Northern Food Self-Sufficiency Awareness Initiative were combined into one option entitled *Northern Food Self-Sufficiency Initiative* (Appendix F page 50).

Northern Food Self-Sufficiency Re-Discovery Project (Appendix F page 50)

This option takes a community development approach to identifying what new resources and programs are needed to increase the provision of local nutritious foods in northern Manitoba. Over a period of one year, a Northern Food Project manager will: 1) gather research and information about producing food in the north; 2) organize the first of a series of self-sufficiency conferences (see below); 3) develop the best practises guidelines for increasing local food provision in northern Manitoba; and will 4) submit a report that outlines the details of a new program that supports local food provision in northern and remote communities. Throughout the project, community participation and input will contribute to the project results.

Northern Food Self-Sufficiency Awareness Initiative (Appendix F page 50)

For a period of five years, a conference, event and/or sharing of community capacity building activities will be organized to: 1) share information and research about the issues related to the high cost of food in northern communities; 2) showcase initiatives that have been successful in addressing the high cost of food in the north; 3) build community capacity to improve nutritional health and to initiate food-based self-sufficiency ventures; and 4) plan next steps to be taken by participants (community, private sector, non-government agencies, government) to reduce the cost of food and increase nutritional health in the north.

Northern Food Business Development (Appendix F page 60)

To reduce the reliance of food imported from the south, this option promotes and supports businesses that produce, process and market nutritious foods in the north. Examples of such businesses include: bakery, greenhouse, gardens, country/wild foods, livestock farms, food retail co-operatives, etc. The types of additional support needed include: a focus and emphasis by all community and economic development programs, services, and funding agencies promoting businesses in northern communities; promote visibility and awareness of northern food issues at conferences, events and training programs; targeted funding, training and support services; the development of northern/remote community economic development models; youth focussed development and training; partnerships with local retailers in the marketing and sale of products.

Northern Greenhouse Pilot Project (Appendix F page 68)

Pilot test in two to three remote communities, the viability of alternative greenhouse-type of production as a means to increase local production of fruits and vegetables. Alternative greenhouse-type systems may include: commercial all-year round structures, low-cost structures used on a seasonal basis, use of abandoned buildings, plastic mulches, abandoned mines, hydroponic systems, systems that utilize waste heat, etc. Additional resources will be needed and include: funding for research and gathering knowledge about new technologies and successes with greenhouse production systems in northern climates; a paid community greenhouse project manager; subsidized energy costs; technical and business management training; funding for capital and operational costs; complementary nutrition education directed at influencing consumption.

Northern Gardens Initiatives (Appendix F page 73)

Increase the number of northern gardens (private, community, school, business) through the promotion and provision of the necessary supports. There are successful models of northern gardens and the following components of success can be shared with other communities: access to local gardening tillage equipment, seed and fertilizer; knowledge, skills and technical support in gardening, storage, preservation, and sales; management and control of vandalism and theft through development of community pride and involvement; youth training and employment.

Northern Country/Wild Foods Development Program (Appendix F page 81)

This option focuses on the encouragement, support and development of food enterprises for the sale and use of locally available country/wild foods. Project teams will work with communities and entrepreneurs to identify, research, develop, produce, process, market and sell country/wild foods locally and as an export product. Partnering agencies will adjust and focus resources to provide substantial support to the Project teams. The Northern Forest Diversification Centre provides services in this area and has been identified as the lead agency.

Northern Livestock Production Pilot Projects (Appendix F page 96)

This option will pilot test the viability of livestock operations for remote and isolated communities. There is some history where farm animals have been raised for food in northern communities. However, there is a need for current information and research as to the viability of livestock operations such as chickens, eggs, rabbits, goats, beef or pork, etc., in remote and isolated northern communities. In addition, issues related to animal slaughter, butchering, inspection, waste management, feed supply, etc., require investigation and innovative solutions. Two to three remote communities would identify themselves to participate in this three to five year pilot study. Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives would be approached to facilitate the pilot by co-ordinating the research, providing technical expertise and working with the communities to provide training, resources, and business planning and other support as needed. Additional resources would be required and include: funding for research and gathering knowledge about new technologies and systems that will work in Manitoba's northern communities; a project manager for each pilot site; technical and business management training and support; funding for capital and operational costs; training on animal slaughter, butchering, food safety and handling systems.

Northern Freezer Purchase Program (Appendix F page 91)

The freezer purchase program will assist families to purchase bulk quantities of nutritious foods at a lower/sale price. A freezer purchase fund will be established by provincial and federal government partnership funding. Northern organizations, MKO, SERDC, MMF and NACC will work co-operatively to purchase the freezers and make them available to any northern citizen, community organization or food business that wishes to purchase one. The program will negotiate a bulk purchase price for freezers, as close to wholesale cost as possible. Northern citizens, organizations, businesses can apply to purchase the freezer and repay the cost monthly, as income level permits. The program will be ongoing for as long as there is demand for freezer purchases. The freezer purchase fund, renewed by repayments, continues to be available for future purchases. Nutrition and food preservation information and education will complement the program.

Northern Community Foods Program (Appendix F page 64)

There have been successful community-based models that help to make traditional foods available to all members of the community. These are based on the cultural tradition of sharing and a sustainable use of native foods. Generally, local hunters or fishermen volunteer to hunt or fish for geese, moose, caribou, or fish and then donate the food to the community. This idea could be extended to native plants such as wild rice, mushrooms, cranberries, etc. Community support would be needed for input into the financial costs and for organizing food storage, preservation and distributions. The Community Foods Program option would promote this concept with various interested communities where the sustainability of the resource is established and if a responsibility centre was identified. If needed, the Community Foods Program option would provide an annual grant to support the costs.

Northern Youth Leadership Training Initiative (Appendix F page 88)

A long-term approach is the training of northern youth today for their future roles in community food self-sufficiency and food business development. A new northern youth leadership skills course will be developed for use with middle grades school students. In addition, a technical education school program will be developed to prepare youth in northern food business careers. Based on community interest and need, the 4-H program as well as Junior Achievement will be promoted, supported and delivered in northern communities in partnership with Frontier School Division, Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre and other schools.

B. – Systems Factors

The detailed description of each option is referenced in Appendix F.

Milk Price Review in Northern Communities (Appendix F page 57)

The Manitoba Milk Price Review Commission will apply procedures currently used in southern Manitoba to review the cost of milk in the north and set appropriate maximum prices. This option will increase the Commission's mandate to also set maximum prices for two and four-litre fluid milk, UHT tetra brick milk, canned milk and lactose-reduced milk products in addition to the current one-litre fluid milk.

Northern Food Price Survey Program (Appendix F page 77)

Food price surveys will be completed in northern and remote communities on a regular basis, using a pricing protocol appropriate for the north and consistent across communities. Data will be used by a variety of partners including MKO, MMF, SERDC, Manitoba Bureau of Statistics, Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, INAC, Food Mail, HC (FNIHB) and Manitoba Hydro. The data will be used to identify food price issues requiring further investigation such as: comparison of nutritious food prices with other northern communities; establishment of northern cost of living or social assistance allowances; development of family budgeting resources; monitoring the effect of programs under other strategic options such as local food provision, transportation subsidy, milk price review, etc.

Northern Freight Rate Reduction Options (Appendix F page 85)

There are several options that government may choose to implement that will reduce the freight/transportation costs of nutritious foods to the north:

1. Government may choose to change regulations to allow trucking companies to use longer truck trailers (Rocky Mountain Doubles) on the more narrow northern roads. It is argued that the change in regulation will help to decrease trucking companies' costs to northern communities. This option proposes

that all such cost savings to the company will be directed to reducing the freight cost of nutritious foods transported to the north.

2. Manitoba may choose to lobby Canada to eliminate the GST charged on the freight costs of nutritious foods to northern Manitoba.
3. Government of Manitoba may choose to design and implement a fuel tax exemption for trucking freight and airfreight companies delivering nutritious foods to northern communities. The province may wish to target the exemption to shipments into the isolated communities without all-weather road access. This exemption could be modelled after the one offered to mining exploration companies for off road exploration and or recovery.
4. Government of Manitoba may choose to enhance the frequency of ferry service into remote communities. During the times of year where ferry service is provided, more frequent ferry service allows for retailers to ship in nutritious perishables on a more regular basis. This supports food retailers in providing a greater quantity of better quality nutritious foods to those communities.

Northern 18-month Food Mail Pilot Project (also a freight reduction option) (Appendix F page 93)

A pilot project in one remote community will test the effectiveness of a substantial transportation subsidy ($.30/kg) for a select list of nutritious foods. This subsidy would be through the Food Mail program funded by INAC and Health Canada and has been found effective in remote communities in other provinces and Territories. The pilot project includes significant consumer education, food and nutrition surveys, and price monitoring throughout the two year pilot.

C. – Consumer Rebate or Incentive

In all of the suggested options, the decision to participate will be made by each community, its leaders, champions and interested partners.

The detailed description of each option is referenced in Appendix F.

Northern Nutritious Food Rebate Program (Appendix F page 103)

Northern families who are eligible for the Healthy Baby, Baby First and Early Start provincial programs would receive coupons that can be used to purchase nutritious foods at their local food store. The target group includes pregnant and breastfeeding women and families with children under six years. Food and nutrition education activities would supplement the nutritious food rebate. This option will require a partnership with the food retailer, its banking institution and the provincial and federal governments.

Northern Nutritious Food Retail Incentive (Appendix F page 107)

Northern food retailers will be encouraged to sell a select list of nutritious foods at lower prices and will receive an incentive based on increased volume of sales. The incentive could involve a financial incentive from government and/or an equipment or merchandise incentive from participating industry wholesalers and processors.

Northern Healthy Foods Rewards Program (Appendix F page 100)

This option encourages the North West Company and Frontier School Division and other schools to work together to develop a Healthy Foods Rewards Program. The Healthy Foods Rewards Program would encourage families to buy nutritious foods and to submit receipts for these purchases to their local school. Based on the volume of sales, the school would obtain rewards in the form of nutritious food products and/or other merchandise from the North West Company.

Guidelines and Criteria for Analysis

A detailed description of each proposed strategic option was developed. These are found in Appendix F.

The detailed description for each proposed option includes:

- Summary description
- Goals
- Outcomes
- Program components

- Partners
- Benefits
- Challenges
- Costs

In addition, the detailed description of each proposed strategic option includes an evaluation of the option based on the following criteria and guidelines (see Appendix F page 49):

- Length of time required to implement – immediate, intermediate, or long-term
- Community need – those with highest food prices – high, medium or low
- Specific issues targeted or type of benefit – These issues are directly related to those identified in the Terms of Reference for the Northern Food Prices project. They include:
  - Extremely high food prices
  - Variability and differences amongst northern communities
  - Issues related to healthy food and healthy lifestyle choices
  - Acceptance or non-acceptance of milk
  - Availability of nutritious foods
  - Transportation and freight charges
  - Distribution system challenges of storage, warehousing and shelf life
  - Food production potential
  - Food processing potential
  - Food retailing potential
  - Disposable income available to purchase nutritious foods
  - Availability of nutritious wild/country foods
- Community type that benefits – This recognizes that a variety of communities make up the north – Remote with Winter Access Roads; Remote with all-weather road and/or rail access; First Nation community; Northern Association of Community Councils smaller non-incorporated communities; Municipal Corporation larger communities.
- Holistic approach to reducing food prices in the community – This recognizes the importance of a broad community-based approach to reducing the retail price of food.

The holistic components that were used in the evaluation include:

- Use of partnerships
- Building networks
- Use of existing resources
- Reaches all citizens in northern Manitoba
- Provides equity with programs, services or policies with southern Manitoba
- Includes education and awareness activities related to nutritious food choices, nutrition and wellness
- Provides economic development opportunity
- Provides opportunities for youth
- Provides community input

- Meets the goals of participating government agencies – Healthy Child Manitoba, Northern Development Strategy, Manitoba Health, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, First Nations and Inuit Health Branch of Health Canada, nutrition and health strategies.
- Ease of Implementation
  - *Complex* – implementation might require extensive multi-party negotiation; new program funding; large funding needs; long-term funding required; significant research and analysis required for implementation; complex evaluation required.
  - *Moderately complex* – implementation might require a multi-party partnership; requires new program funding but is within existing known funding mandates; compliments partners' mandates; and has a model or template to follow.
  - *Not complex* – implementation might require only one partner to make the decision; little or no new funding required; minimal long-term monitoring or evaluation required; can be introduced into existing programs, systems or job functions; relates directly to the partners' existing mandate; a model or template exists to follow.
  - *Public and/or political* acceptability.
- Other considerations – Pilot project, workability, sustainability and cautionary notes.

These criteria and guidelines were used by the Northern Food Prices Project Steering Committee as the basis for making the recommendations found in this report. The decision-making tool is found in Appendix G. Steering Committee participants individually evaluated each option based on the above criteria and guidelines. The follow-up discussion confirmed the results of the evaluation process and resulted in the prioritized strategic option recommendations.

Impact and Implementation Analysis

The Northern Food Prices project recognizes the importance of the decisions to be made that would result in lower retail prices for nutritious foods in the north. Each of the recommended strategic options requires a partnership approach including the province, Canada, northern stakeholders and industry. To evaluate the strategic options further an Impact and Cost analysis grid was used.

Impact – relates to greatest ability of the strategic option to reduce the retail price of nutritious foods, either immediately or over time.

Implementation – relates to the complexity of implementing the option (as described above). This evaluation considers financial costs as well as other factors.

Resource Implication Analysis

To assist decision-makers to determine the resource implications of each of the proposed strategic options, an initial attempt was made to outline the human, financial and resource implications. This is found in the costs section of the detailed description of each option (Appendix F). It must be understood that within the time-frame and abilities of the Northern Food Prices Project, more detailed analysis was not possible.

Therefore, this section of the report is to be used as a possible guideline based on the vision of how the strategic option might be implemented. Prior to implementation, the lead stakeholder (the province, Canada, northern stakeholder or industry) would complete the process of strategic option development. This would include an in-depth analysis that provides the detailed information related to human, financial and resource costs.

Impact and Implementation Evaluation Grid

High Impact/Not Complex **Northern Food Self-Sufficiency Initiative (Re-Discovery Project and Awareness Initiative) **Northern Greenhouse Pilot Project **Northern Gardens Initiatives **Northern Food Price Survey Program Northern Freezer Purchase Program Northern Youth Leadership Training Initiative Northern Healthy Food Rewards Program	**Lower Impact/Not Complex** **Milk Price Review in Northern Communities
High Impact/Complex **Northern Food Business Development **Northern Community Foods Program Northern Nutritious Food Retail Incentive Northern Nutritious Food Rebate Program Northern Country/Wild Foods Development Program Northern Livestock Production Pilot Projects Northern Freight Rate Reduction Options Northern 18-Month Food Mail Pilot Project	**Lower Impact/Complex**

** Prioritized Strategic Options

Recommendations

The task of the Northern Food Prices Project, as mandated by the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet, was to address the concern about the high cost of food as it relates to the nutritional health of northerners. As stated in the Context section of this report, the Northern Food Prices Project recognizes the complexity of food security in the north and the need for many strategies delivered through integrated and collaborative efforts. However, the project's specific focus was on strategic options that could reduce the retail price of nutritious foods such as milk and milk products, including infant formula and lactose-reduced products, fresh fruits and vegetables, meats, whole grains, and staples to northern citizens.

The Northern Food Prices Project acknowledges that each of the strategic options described in this report has merit and support from various stakeholders. Each of the options, if implemented as described in the detailed description (Appendix F), has the potential to result in lower nutritious food costs to northern citizens either in the short or long term. However, as a result of the stakeholder responses and significant analysis, seven of the proposed strategic options are prioritized and recommended for implementation.

Assumptions

The reader of this report will find the following assumptions as a basis for each of prioritized strategic options. These assumptions are important components to addressing the issue of high nutritious food retail prices in northern communities and to the extent possible, have been incorporated into each option:

- Acknowledge that there is an appreciable level of food insecurity in many northern Manitoba communities.
- A broad range of strategic options is needed to address the problem of high food costs and improved nutritional health in northern Manitoba.
- Both short- and long-term solutions are needed.
- Options target a variety of nutritious foods and not one individual food item.
- New financial and human resources will be needed in some areas.
- Existing models, resources or programs may result in easier implementation and greater efficiency.
- Respect for the diversity and demographics of northern communities.
- The highest need communities are those who must incur fly-in freight charges and systems.
- Community consultation, community-based ownership of the options, community capacity building and holistic solutions are essential to the success of any strategic option.
- Nutrition and health education, awareness and resources must be integrated into all options.
- Community and economic development is an important component for long-term solutions.
- Implementation must take place with a partnership approach, which includes northern citizens, representative organizations, food retailers and industry and various municipal, provincial and federal government departments.
- Any new employment opportunities are to benefit northern people and communities.

Prioritized Strategic Options

In order of priority, the following seven strategic options are recommended to the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet. This set of strategic options is recommended as an efficient, effective and sustainable means by which the issue of high cost for nutritious foods in the north can be resolved.

As an eighth option for further study and consideration, a Food Cost Rebate option is discussed. This is brought forward for consideration, should governments wish to provide a direct subsidy to the high cost of food for those who live in communities with the highest retail prices for nutritious foods.

1. **Northern Food Self-Sufficiency Initiative** (Appendix F page 50)

   This option combines the two different options studied in the Northern Food Prices Project – the Northern Food Self-Sufficiency Re-Discovery Project and the Northern Food Self-Sufficiency Awareness Initiative. This option provides a comprehensive strategy to build local food provision activity and capacity in the north. As food is produced, harvested and/or processed locally, the cost of food may be reduced by replacing the imported product with a local food supply. Components of this include:

   - Gathering research and information about producing food in the north
   - Develop best practises guidelines for producing food in northern Manitoba
   - Delivery of a series of conferences, workshops and community sharing sessions over a period of five years focussed on building community capacity for food self-sufficiency
   - Identify and outline the details for a new program on food self-sufficiency as determined by community input and participation

2. **Milk Price Review in Northern Communities** (Appendix F page 57)

   This option is one that uses existing legislation and resources to apply the current Milk Price Review program to all of Manitoba. A maximum fair market price for one litre fluid milk can be established in all northern communities. To ensure this new service provided by the Manitoba Milk Price Review Commission provides maximum value to northern food prices, it is recommended that this service be extended to two- and four-litre fluid milk, UHT milk, canned milk and lactose-reduced milk products. This additional milk product pricing will require legislative and regulatory changes as well extensive northern food market systems research and the development of new pricing formulas. This option does not affect the price paid to milk producers.

3. **Northern Food Business Development** (Appendix F page 60)

   This option focuses on existing business and community development programs, funds and services and is complementary to the Northern Food Self-Sufficiency Initiative. This option encourages existing programs to facilitate the development, financing, and support of food businesses and activity. Micro-enterprise development is key to long-term sustainability of local food provision initiatives. It is important to acknowledge that local food enterprises can be successful in very different forms, depending on the needs of the community: for-profit, non-profit, co-op businesses, youth training, individual or partnership ventures or community projects.

4. **Northern Community Foods Program** (Appendix F page 64)

   This option builds on the cultural tradition of sharing abundance with others. Where sustainable use of wild meats, fish or plants through organized hunting, fishing, or gathering programs can make a significant difference to the food security in a community.

   This option builds on the success of existing community sharing models that include community food distribution, food preservation, and cultural education of traditional foods. This option assists communities to help other communities to set up an organized community foods program that serves the need in the community. This is done by:

   - Facilitating informal sharing and educational workshops and events for a period of three to five years
   - Establishment of a community foods program fund to assist communities in start up and annual operating costs
   - Incorporating the use of traditional foods into youth education programs such as 4-H and the schools

5. **Northern Greenhouse Pilot Project** (Appendix F page 68)

   This option focuses on the production of local vegetables and fruits. The pilot project will identify the types of greenhouse technology or other innovative technology such as the use of abandoned mines to grow vegetables and fruits. The pilot will develop best practises for greenhouse-type production in the north and use two to three pilot projects to test the success of these systems, production practises and training needed. It is possible that the Greenhouse Pilot Project could be delivered in conjunction with the Northern Gardens Initiatives below.

6. **Northern Gardens Initiatives** (Appendix F page 73)

   This option focuses on the production of local vegetables and fruits by facilitating gardening projects where possible. This option builds on the successful history and experience with gardening in the north. A community would decide what kind of gardening meets their needs: individual gardens, community gardens, commercial and market gardening; school or youth gardening initiatives. A small amount of funding can be provided to assist in buying equipment, seeds, fertilizer and a community worker to manage the program. There could be a strong link to the Northern Greenhouse Pilot Project above with starter plants being supplied by the greenhouse.

7. **Northern Food Price Survey Program** (Appendix F page 77)

   It is important to have credible, accurate food pricing information available to be able to speak to the issue of high food costs in northern Manitoba. This option builds on and uses existing resources to co-ordinate the regular collection, analysis, and dissemination of northern food prices. This information complements all other actions that might be taken to resolve the problem of high food prices. Regular food price surveys can contribute to an evaluation of success of other options that may be implemented as well as provide a monitoring function of food prices over time. There is strong support from northern organizations and communities to use this much needed data base as a planning and decision-making tool.

Additional Strategic Options

The remaining strategic options identified and studied through the Northern Food Prices Project are included in this report as viable strategic options as well. However, it is recognized that the provincial government does not have unlimited resources.

It is quite possible that another stakeholder or partner might very well choose to continue the work of the Northern Food Prices Project and design or implement one of these strategic options. If the Northern Food Prices Project Steering Committee could see this as a realistic possibility, it is mentioned below.

1. **Northern Country/Wild Foods Program** (Appendix F page 81)

   The Northern Forest Diversification plays an important role in the province by facilitating and supporting local micro-enterprise development. There is potential for a sustainable use of wild plants as a local food source. Manitoba Conservation works with northern citizens in sustainable use of fish supplies and wild game. This option encourages and supports these kinds of activities with the focus on providing food to local citizens. Once this local need is satisfied, there may be additional market opportunities that can provide a source of income and economic development.

2. **Northern Freight Rate Reduction Options** (Appendix F page 85)

   Freight costs are extremely high for isolated communities that must ship nutritious foods in by air freight or over winter roads. This group of options identifies four different regulatory, policy or tax options that would have a direct effect on the freight costs for food retailers. It is critical that any of the options proposed would be designed to be sure that the lower freight costs would be passed on to the consumer in lower food prices.

3. **Northern Youth Leadership Training Initiative** (Appendix F page 88)

   Wherever appropriate in the recommended strategic options, education and involvement of youth is an important part of the option. This strategic option identifies two existing youth programs that government currently supports, the 4-H and Junior Achievement programs. This option recommends increased resources and new materials to be developed to support successful delivery of the Junior Achievement and 4-H programs in northern communities. The Frontier School Division, Manitoba First Nation Education Resource Centre and other schools are targeted as playing an important role in assisting communities in delivering these youth programs.

4. **Northern Freezer Purchase Program** (Appendix F page 91)

   One solution to reducing retail food costs is to be able to make bulk purchases of foods and freeze them until ready to use. Freezers can also compliment the use of locally grown or harvested fruits, vegetables, meats, fish or game. This option could be implemented by Manitoba Hydro, in partnership with northern stakeholder groups. By negotiating a wholesale price of freezers and a discount in freight costs, citizens, schools, other organizations and food retailers could purchase a freezer and pay back the loan in small monthly amounts.

5. **Northern 18-Month Food Mail Pilot Project** (Appendix F page 93)

   The Food Mail is an air transportation subsidy program for nutritious foods and is funded by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). It has been in operation for a number of years, but is currently not used by retailers in Manitoba. This strategic option would request a pilot project that includes a much reduced freight rate for one of Manitoba's isolated communities. This pilot includes a holistic approach of nutrition education, as well as nutrition and food security surveys. This pilot project researches the effect of freight rate subsidy on people's food consumption patterns and nutrient intakes and includes Health Canada (HC) funding. Unfortunately, the long-term status of the Food Mail Program and the availability of pilot project funding are uncertain at this time. A local food retailer, a community or northern organization, INAC or HC could choose to pursue this option.

6. **Northern Livestock Production Pilot Project** (Appendix F page 96)

   Local food provision is an important goal that will help to reduce the price of foods in the north. This option focuses on the production of domesticated animals to provide a local food supply. There is some experience and history of livestock production in the north. However, there are many unknown factors that must be tested prior to being able to encourage and support animal production, slaughter and processing in northern communities.

   This pilot project focuses efforts to test and develop best practises and innovative production methods that deal with the special circumstances of the north. Livestock production becomes more complex when the regulations and legislation related to food safety, food processing, environmental management are considered. This pilot project would help to determine whether or not lower food costs could be achieved by producing meat products locally.

7. **For further study and consideration: Food Cost Rebate Option** (Appendix F pages 100-109)

   Recognizing that there are families in northern Manitoba that struggle with the ability to purchase higher cost nutritious foods, the Northern Food Prices Project Steering Committee felt it important to investigate potential nutritious food subsidy ideas. A nutritious food subsidy, in some form or another, could provide the most immediate impact on the high retail price of foods in the north.

   Three different potential options were described and discussed with stakeholders, but there was insufficient time, resources, and community feedback to be able to make a specific recommendation to the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet. However, the three ideas as described in the Consumer Rebate or Incentive category of proposed options are discussed below.

   The Northern Healthy Foods Rewards Program (Appendix F page 100) – The benefit of this option is more in education and awareness than in the reduction of retail food prices. However, any initiative that encourages an increase in the volume of sales can result in reduced prices for that product. This option encourages schools and local retailers to work together. When customers make purchases of nutritious foods, they become aware that their purchases will result in reward points given to the local school. At a designated level of reward points, the school receives a reward or benefit from the food retailer. The reward would be related to use of nutritious foods in the school.

The Northern Food Prices Project encourages schools and food retailers to pursue potential initiatives in this area. Government's role in these types of initiatives would be to acknowledge efforts made by food retailers and schools in their commitment to healthy communities and to promote and support these innovative initiatives wherever appropriate.

The Northern Nutritious Food Rebate Program (Appendix F page 103) suggests a direct subsidy of the retail price of nutritious foods to a targeted group of northern citizens. Based on community desire to participate, this option proposes a food rebate/coupon that could be used to purchase nutritious foods from the local food store.

To make delivery of this option as efficient as possible it is suggested that an existing provincial program be utilized to administer the subsidy. This would avoid the need to design a new administrative system. This nutritious food rebate would be targeted and delivered to Healthy Baby, Baby First and Early Start participants.

Provincial programs currently include the use of coupons, or supplies of milk, to assist families in acquiring this nutritious food. Unfortunately, there are some barriers to reaching the target clients (pregnant and nursing moms, and families with children under the age of seven) who live in First Nation communities.

Some First Nation communities have chosen to participate in the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP), a federally funded program. The CPNP uses food coupons to educate and encourage the purchase of nutritious foods. Northern food retailers support the use of customer coupons for nutritious food purchases. The retailers interviewed also indicated their additional administration costs are an acceptable contribution on their part.

There is concern that this nutritious food rebate option is not universal and does not provide benefit to all citizens in the community. It is difficult to project at what level a nutritious food subsidy might be established and whether the levels should be higher for those communities with the highest food prices (fly-in remote communities). Please see more detail in Appendix F. This option would require significant analysis prior to implementation.

The Northern Food Retail Incentive (Appendix F page 107) proposes a direct subsidy of the retail price of nutritious foods to the participating food retailer. Based on community desire to participate, a food retailer is given a rebate/incentive in order to provide a list of nutritious foods at a lower than retail price. The food retailer applies for a rebate when an increased volume of sales has been achieved by lowering the price to the consumer.

When consumers and retailers are able to sustain the increased level of sales and consumption of nutritious foods at the lower prices, the rebate/incentive would no longer be needed. The rebate could be a direct government rebate or an incentive from industry. This idea allows for 'universal' benefit to all members of the community who would be able to buy nutritious foods at a lower cost.

The involvement of the local food retailer who is interested in increasing the volume of sales of nutritious foods is integral to the success of the subsidy option. A nutritious food subsidy at the grocery store level, rather than a freight cost subsidy, involves the business that is closest to the customer, the food retailer. This should make it easier to see the direct benefit to the customer with lower food prices. However, providing subsidies/rebates to industry is complex and difficult to design in such a way that both the goal of lower food prices for consumers is achieved and the procedures are efficient and not too costly for industry to apply. Please see more detail in Appendix F. This option would require significant analysis and development prior to implementation.

It is possible that a blend of consumer subsidy and industry incentives to food retailers might make the most successful nutritious food subsidy option, should government choose to pursue such an option.

Conclusion

Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet made a commitment to action on the issue of high northern food costs and the related impact on the nutritional health of northern citizens. This commitment came by way of establishing the Northern Food Prices Project. The Steering Committee for the Northern Food Prices Project carried out a comprehensive study related to the retail price of nutritious foods in northern Manitoba. All material gathered for this project has been catalogued and retained for future use. A variety of stakeholder organizations provided commentary and input to the discussion of the issue and strategic options that may have an impact on lowering food costs in their communities.

The Northern Food Prices Project Steering Committee Report outlines seven recommendations for Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet to consider plus one additional idea for further study. The priority recommendation is to pursue the Northern Food Self-Sufficiency Initiative. This strategic option provides a comprehensive framework for a five-year period that builds local food provision activity and capacity in the north. As food is produced, harvested and/or processed locally, the cost of food may be reduced by replacing the 'imported' product with a local food supply.

Four additional strategic options also support initiatives related to local food provision. These range from a business development perspective (Northern Food Business Development) to food production activity (Northern Greenhouse Pilot Project and Northern Gardening Program) to the sustainable use of traditional foods (Northern Community Foods Program).

Two additional recommendations are important to the evaluation and monitoring of Northern food prices over time. The Milk Price Review in Northern Communities extends the Manitoba Milk Price Review Commission's work to the whole province and would set fair market maximum prices for a number of milk products. The Northern Food Price Survey Program would establish a comprehensive and accessible food pricing data base. All interested stakeholders could use the data base to research, analyze and evaluate issues related to northern food prices and cost of living.

The remaining strategic options identified and studied through the Northern Food Prices Project are included in this report as viable strategic options as well. However, it is recognized that the provincial government does not have unlimited resources.

It is quite possible that another stakeholder or partner might choose to continue the work of the Northern Food Prices Project and design or implement one of these strategic options.

The Northern Food Prices Project Report offers a detailed description (Appendix F) as to how each of the recommended strategic options could be implemented. Should Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet decide to implement any or all of the recommendations, a detailed analysis of the human, financial and program resource implications would be needed.

The Northern Food Prices Project Steering Committee is confident that through collaborative efforts, the high cost of nutritious foods can be lowered. This report provides Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet with an information base from which the solutions to the high cost of nutritious foods can be pursued. It is hoped that other northern stakeholders also see their role and opportunities to work towards a common goal of an affordable and accessible nutritious food supply for northern Manitoba citizens.

Terms of Reference

Northern Food Prices Project Steering Committee

Purpose

- The intersectoral Northern Food Prices Project Steering Committee will develop and deliver a report that identifies strategic options addressing the concern about high food prices in northern Manitoba.
- As recommended by the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet, this committee's recommendations will narrow the scope of the topic. This is necessary to accomplish the task within the three to six month time period and to provide realistic and actionable strategic options for consideration. The focus, therefore, will be on strategic options that can effectively reduce the retail price of nutritious foods such as milk, fresh fruits, vegetables, meat and staples to northern citizens.
- Issues related to northern food prices are multi-faceted and complex. Recognizing that this project's focus is but one component, summary descriptions and potential 'next steps' will be identified for other issues identified in the process. This will allow for consideration on a project-by-project basis in the future.

Background

- The issue of food prices in the north is a multi-faceted and complex one. A variety of existing reports, research, previous committee work and consultations will be studied and utilized as a base for this project.
- The Northern Food Prices Project Steering Committee will consult with various stakeholders (see Information Gathering and Fact Finding section) to glean both new information and potential strategic options for consideration.
- Some of the many issues related to food in the north have been identified:
    - extremely high food prices in comparison to southern Manitoba
    - acceptance level of milk as a beverage of choice – competing beverages are often of low nutritional value – lactose intolerance
    - issues related to healthy food and lifestyle choices and their benefits
    - high incidence of obesity, diabetes and nutrient deficiencies
    - limited availability of nutritious foods
    - transportation challenges; large distances between communities
    - distribution system challenges; requirements for storage/warehousing and product shelf life
    - lack of competition in the wholesale and retail marketplace
    - food production potential and limitations
    - food processing potential and limitations
    - food retailing potential and limitations
    - variability and differences between northern communities such as road access, degree of isolation, available retail competition
    - nutritious indigenous and alternate foods
    - disposable income available to purchase food
- Based on the time line of three to six months to complete analysis, consultation and development of strategic options, this committee will focus on strategies to reduce the retail price of nutritious foods such as milk, fresh fruits, vegetables, meat and staples to northern citizens. In relation to how/why the food is priced, the committee will investigate the following topics/issues:
    - demographics and variations of northern communities
    - transportation systems and costs
    - infrastructure and government regulations
    - types of food stores and their costs

  - lack of competition in certain locations
  - food distribution and warehousing systems and costs
  - Food Mail Program
  - self-sufficiency in food production, processing and/or marketing/retailing food by northern citizens
  - taxation issues related to food in the north
  - the school system and food options
  - nutrition and health issues related to access to nutritious food
  - identification of food alternatives and indigenous food supplies
  - evaluation of what foods are wanted/needed by northern citizens
- Viable strategic options will be developed that will result in nutritious foods such as milk, fresh vegetables, meat and staples being offered for sale at a price lower than current practice.
- It is clearly understood that strategic options will affect all northern citizens, and are not specifically related to income assistance clients.

Committee Members

The Northern Food Prices Project Steering includes Manitoba, Government of Canada and First Nations representatives:

Debora Lyall, Chair
Northern Food Prices Project Coordinator
Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives/
Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs

Ray Irvine
Analyst, Program Planning and Development
Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs

Judy Storey
Food Marketing Officer
Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives

Kelly McQuillen
Manager, Diabetes and Chronic Disease
Manitoba Health

Grant Doak
Executive Director Policy and Planning
Manitoba Family Services and Housing

Joyce MacMartin
Coordinator Program and Policy Services
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Judy White, Policy Analyst
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Janet Fontaine
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Brian Gudmundson
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Louisa Constant
Social Services Advisor
Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO)

Laurel Gardiner
Building Sustainable Workforces Project
Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO)

Kitty Keeper
South East Resource Development Corporation

Robert Allec
Senior Negotiator/Policy Analyst
Manitoba Region
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

Susan Russell, Manager
Nutrition, Diabetes and Wellness Unit
Health Canada, First Nations Stream

Jim Beardy
Social Development Advisor
Keewatin Tribal Council

Dr. Marion Campbell
Private Consultant and Researcher

Anna Nault
Jeff Betker
Policy Analysts
Manitoba Metis Federation

Norman Lacquette/Anne Lacquette
Western Regional Chairperson
Reg Meade/Francis McIvor
President/Northern Regional Chair
Northern Association of Community Councils

Information Gathering and Fact Finding

Various stakeholders will be invited to provide input and suggest strategic options that address the concern about high prices for nutritious foods in northern Manitoba. Invitations will be extended to the following:

Dr. Daryl Kraft, Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences, University of Manitoba

Manitoba Milk Producers

Milk Prices Review Board

Animal Industry Branch, Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives

Soils and Crops Branch, Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives

Food Development Centre, Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives

Boards and Commissions, Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives

Manitoba Liquor Control Commission

Food Mail Program

Healthy Child Manitoba

Kathi Kinew, Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs

Gail Wylie, Healthy Start Program

Gord Wakeling, Communities Economic Development Fund

Aboriginal Health Directorate, Manitoba Health

Fred Hill, Indian and Northern Affairs

Pat Allen and/or Lynne Foley, Health Canada

Rich Danis and Roberta Coleman, Manitoba Transportation and Government Services

Manitoba Women's Directorate

Small Business and Co-operative Development

Transportation Institute

The North West Company

Transportation companies (Gardewine North)

Country Foods Store, Nelson House

Medallion Milk Co. Ltd.

Al Charr, Co-operative Development Services, Manitoba Industry, Trade and Mines

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Frontier School Division

Norman Regional Development Corporation

Neechi Foods

Manitoba Consumer and Corporate Affairs

Northern Development Strategy

Provincial and Federal nutrition programs and strategies

Community Group Discussions

Following a first draft report which will include suggested strategic options, community group discussions with the following organizations, agencies and businesses will be requested to verify/qualify the proposed strategic options:

Manitoba Metis Federation

Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation

Northern Municipalities (AMM)

Norway House Cree Nation

Northern Association of Community Councils

Cross Lake First Nation

Island Lake Tribal Council

Swampy Cree Tribal Council

Keewatin Tribal Council

South East Resource Development Corporation

Chambers of Commerce – Churchill, Thompson, Flin Flon, The Pas

Corporate stakeholders

Action Plan and Time Line

July 31st
Initial committee meeting – introductions, orientation to the project and strategize the work plan

August – mid-September
Consultations (weekly meetings) to clearly understand the multi-faceted and complex issues

Mid October
Draft document with strategic options developed for discussion

October – end-November
Consultations to verify/qualify strategic options

Beginning December
Draft report submitted for review and consideration

December 20
Final report submitted to Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet for consideration

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Executive Director
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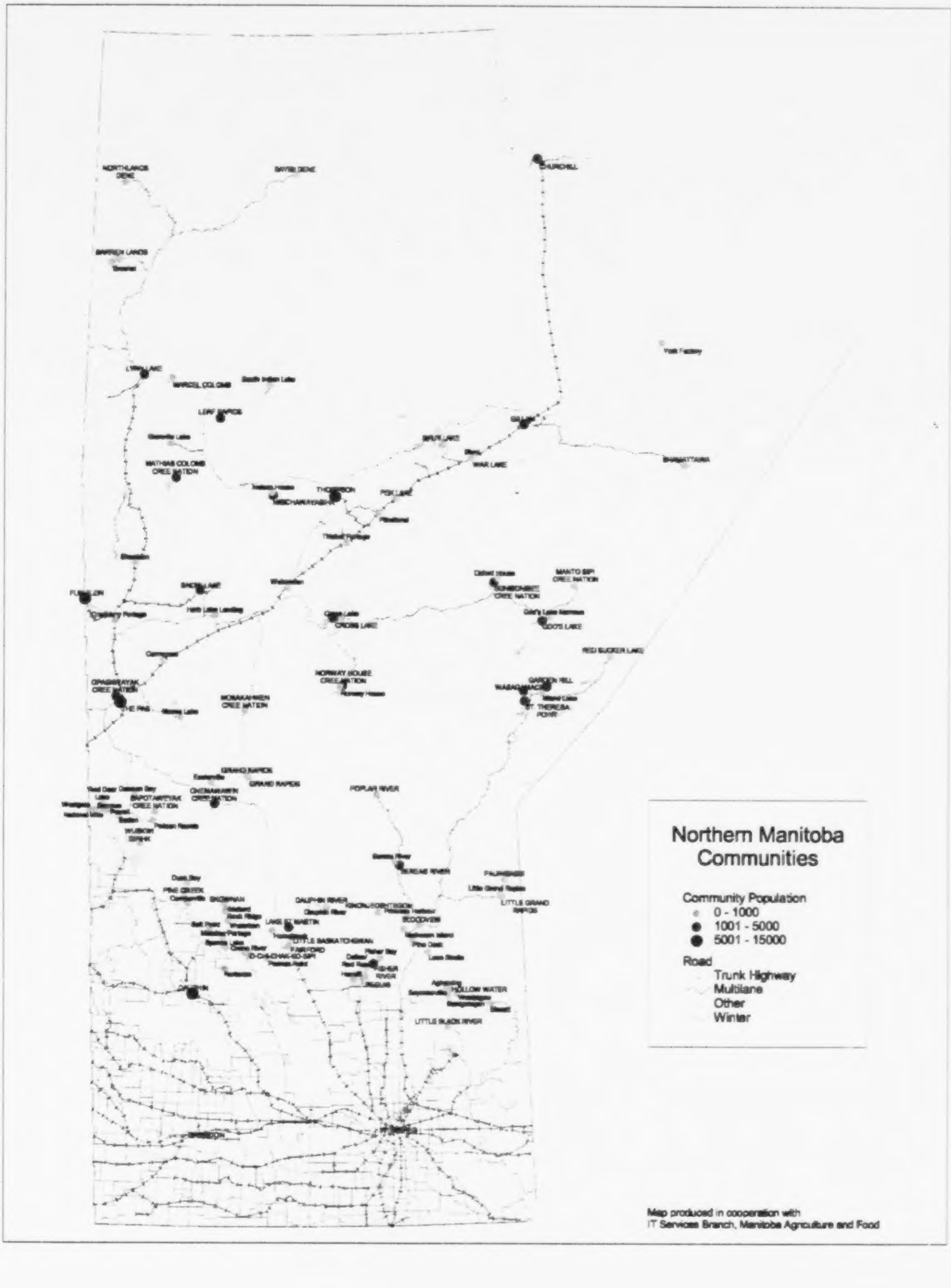
Northern Manitoba Communities


Northern Manitoba Communities
Community Population
● 0 - 1000
● 1001 - 5000
● 5001 - 15000
Road
Trunk Highway
Multilane
Other
Winter
CHURCHILL
NORTHLANDS DENE
SAYISI DENE
BARREN LANDS
York Factory
LYNN LAKE
MARCEL COLOMB
South Indian Lake
LEAF RAPIDS
MATHIAS COLOMB CREE NATION
GILLAM
SPLIT LAKE
WAR LAKE
SHAMATTAWA
THOMPSON
FOX LAKE
Thicket Portage
FLIN FLON
SNOW LAKE
Cranberry Portage
Oxford House
MANTO SIPI CREE NATION
CROSS LAKE
GOD'S LAKE
RED SUCKER LAKE
NORWAY HOUSE CREE NATION
Norway House
GARDEN HILL
ST. THERESA POINT
OPASKWAYAK CREE NATION
THE PAS
MOSAKAHIKEN CREE NATION
GRAND RAPIDS
CHEMAWAWIN CREE NATION
POPLAR RIVER
SAPOTAWEYAK CREE NATION
Pelican Rapids
WUSKWI SIPIHK
PAUINGASSI
LITTLE GRAND RAPIDS
Duck Bay
PINE CREEK
SKOWNAN
DAUPHIN RIVER
LAKE ST MARTIN
LITTLE SASKATCHEWAN
FAIRFORD
O-CHI-CHAK-KO-SIPI
FISHER RIVER
HOLLOW WATER
LITTLE BLACK RIVER
DAUPHIN
BRANDON

Map produced in cooperation with
IT Services Branch, Manitoba Agriculture and Food

Northern Community Chart

			Transportation						Schools
Community	**Estimated Community Population**	**% on S.A.**	**Road**	**Rail**	**Air***	**Airstrip**	**Ferry/ Barge**	**Food Stores**	**Division/ Grades**
Aghaming	10	38*	A	-	-	-	-	-	-
Seymourville	135	38*	A	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hollow Water FN	672	44	A	-	-	-	-	Ind.	F, N-12
Baden	38	82	A	-	-	-	-	-	-
Brochet	250	20	W	-	Sk, DC	Code 1 Gvl	-	N.W.	F, N-9
Barren Lands FN (Brochet)	539	69	W	-	Sk, DC	Code 1 Gvl	-	N.W.	F, N-12
Barrows	27	23*	A	-	-	-	-	-	F, N-9
National Mills	20	23*	A	-	-	-	-	-	-
Powell	15	23*	A	-	-	-	-	-	-
Red Deer Lake	40	23*	A	-	-	-	-	-	-
Berens River	105	13	W	-	Pe, Nth	Code 1 Gvl	yes	N.W., Ind.	-
Berens River FN	1,072	58	W	-	Pe, Nth	Code 1 Gvl	yes	N.W.	F, N-9
Bissett	243	2	A	-	-	-	-	Ind.	F, N-9
Bloodvein FN	671	58	W	-	Nth	Code 1 Gvl	Yes	Ind.	FN, N-9
Oxford House	N/A	N/A	W	-	Pe, Sk	Code 1 Gvl	-	N.W., Ind.	-
Bunibonibee Cree Nation (Oxford House) FN	1,859	56	W	-	Pe, Sk	Code 1 Gvl	-	N.W.	(2) FN, N-6, 7-12
Camperville	524	69	A	-	-	-	-	Ind.	DM, K-7
Pine Creek FN	984	41	A	-	-	-	-	Ind.	FN, N-11
Easterville	80	59	A	-	-	-	-	Ind.	-
Chemawawin Cree Nation FN	1,094	56	A	-	-	-	-	N.W., Ind.	F, K-9
Churchill MC	1,083	7	-	Yes	Clm, Sk	(2) Code 2 Gvl, Ashlt	Yes	N.W., Ind.	F, K-12
Cormorant	400	43	A	-	-	-	-	Ind.	F, N-10
Crane River	161	58	A	-	-	-	-	Ind.	F, N-8, AD
O-Chi-Chak-Ko-Sipi (Crane River) FN	304	N/A	A	-	-	-	-	Ind.	FN, N-8
Cross Lake	294	35	A	-	Pe, Pim, Sk	Code 1 Gvl	Yes	N.W.	F, N-9
Cross Lake FN	4,143	20	A	-	Pe, Pim, Sk	Code 1 Gvl	Yes	N.W.	(2) FN, N-12, N-8
Dallas/ Red Rose	65	N/A	A	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dauphin River	10	2*	A	-	-	-	-	-	-

Legend

FN	First Nation
MC	Municipal Corporation
S.A.	Per cent of population receiving social assistance based on Postal Code
A	All-weather road
W	Winter road

Air

*transportation figures based on scheduled stops

Sk	Skyward Aviation
DC	Dene Cree
Pe	Perimeter Airlines
Nth	Northway Aviation
Pim	Pimchikamak Air
Clm	Calm Air
Br	Bearskin Airlines
Bv	Beaver Air Services Ltd.

Airstrip

Code 1	2,650 ft - 3,998 ft
Code 2	3,999 ft and up
Gvl	Gravel
Ashlt	Asphalt

Food Stores

N.W.	North West Company
Ind.	Independent

Schools

F	Frontier School Division
DM	Duck Mountain School Division
Fe	Federal owned
N	Nursery
K	Kindergarten
AD	Adult Education

			Transportation						Schools
Community	**Estimated Community Population**	**% on S.A.**	**Road**	**Rail**	**Air***	**Airstrip**	**Ferry/ Barge**	**Food Stores**	**Division/ Grades**
Dauphin River FN	149	48	A	-	-	-	-	-	FN, N-9
Homebrook - Peonan Point	46	2*	A	-	-	-	-	-	F, 1-9
Little Saskatchewan FN	528	26	A	-	-	-	-	Ind.	FN, N-10
Lake St. Martin FN	1,232	35	A	-	-	-	-	Ind.	FN, N-9
Dawson Bay	25	100+	A	-	-	-	-	-	-
Duck Bay	454	54	A	-	-	-	-	Ind.	F, N-9
Fisher Bay	35	11	A	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fisher River FN	1,618	N/A	A	-	-	-	-	Ind.	FN,N-12
Flin Flon MC	7,500+	4	A	Yes	Clm, Br	Code 1 ashlt	-	MSC, Ind	4 schools, K-12
Gillam MC	1,534	2	A	Yes	Clm	Code 2, ashlt	-	Mem	F,N-12
Fox Lake (Gillam, Bird) FN	259	N/A	A	A	-	-	-	Ind.	FN, N-8
Garden Hill FN	2,980	61	W	-	Sk, Pe	Code 1 Gvl	-	N.W., Ind.	(2) FN, N-12
Stevenson Island (Island Lake)	59	N/A	W	-	Pe, Sk	Code 2 Gvl	-	N.W., Ind	F, N-9
Gods Lake Narrows	113	19	W	-	Sk, Pe	Code 1 Gvl	Yes	N.W., Ind.	F, 1-12
God's Lake FN	1,240	60	W	-	Sk, Pe	Code 1 Gvl	-	N.W., Ind.	FN, N-8
Grand Rapids MC	404	11	A	-	-	-	-	Ind.	F, N-12
Grand Rapids FN	763	53	A	-	-	-	-	Ind.	F, N-12
Granville Lake	69	N/A	A	-	-	-	-	Ind.	F, N-9
Harwill	19	42	A	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kinonjeoshtegon FN (Jackhead)	290	71	A	-	-	-	-	-	FN, N-8
Herb Lake Landing	15	1*	A	-	-	-	-	-	-
Snow Lake MC	1,310	1*	A	-	-	-	-	Ind.	F, N-12
Ilford	143	1	W	Yes	-	-	-	Ind.	F, N-9
War Lake FN	140	37	W	Yes	-	-	-	-	FN, K-8
Leaf Rapids MC	1,500	4	A	-	-	-	-	Co-op	F, N-12
Little Grand Rapids	10	N/A	W	-	Nth	Code 1 Gvl	-	N.W., Ind	-
Little Grand Rapids FN	911	58	W	-	Nth	Code 1 Gvl	-	N.W., Ind.	FN, N-12
Pauingassi FN	484	69	W	-	Nth	Gvl	-	N.W	FN, N-9
Loon Straits	10	N/A	W	-	-	-	-	-	-

Legend

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S.A.	Per cent of population receiving social assistance based on Postal Code
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W	Winter road

Air

*transportation figures based on scheduled stops

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Pe	Perimeter Airlines
Nth	Northway Aviation
Pim	Pimchikamak Air
Clm	Calm Air
Br	Bearskin Airlines
Bv	Beaver Air Services Ltd.

Airstrip

Code 1	2,650 ft - 3,998 ft
Code 2	3,999 ft and up
Gvl	Gravel
Ashlt	Asphalt

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Schools

F	Frontier School Division
DM	Duck Mountain School Division
Fe	Federal owned
N	Nursery
K	Kindergarten
AD	Adult Education

			Transportation						Schools
Community	Estimated Community Population	% on S.A.	Road	Rail	Air*	Airstrip	Ferry/ Barge	Food Stores	Division/ Grades
Lynn Lake MC	1,038	20	A	Yes	Clm	Code 2, ashlt	AD	N.W.	F, K-12,
Marcel Colomb FN	243	N/A	A	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mallard	145	33*	A	-	-	-	-	-	-
Waterhen	171	33*	A	-	-	-	-	Ind.	F, N-9, Ad
Manigotagan	192	19	A	-	-	-	-	Ind.	-
Manto Sipi Cree Nation (God's River) FN	517	47	W	-	Sk, Pe	Code 1 Gvl	-	Ind.	Fe, N-10
Matheson Island	99	8	A	-	-	-	Yes	Ind., Co-op	F, N-9
Mathias Colomb	2,017	65	W	-	Sk, Clm,	Code 1	-	N.W.,Co-op	FN, N-12
Cree Nation (Pukatawagan) FN		Bv	?						
Meadow Portage	80	6	A	-	-	-	-	Ind.	-
Moose Lake	212	58	A	-	-	-	-	N.W., Ind.	F, N-9
Mosakahiken Cree Nation (Moose Lake) FN	958	57	A	-	-	-	-	N.W.	F, N-9
Nelson House	54	41	A	-	-	-	-	N.W.	-
Nisichawayahihk Cree Nation (Nelson House) FN	3,388	21	A	-	-	-	-	N.W., Ind.	FN, N-12
Northlands Dene FN (Lac Brochet)	715	57	W	-	Sk, DC	Code 1 Gvl	-	N.W., Ind.	FN, N-12
Norway House	456	21	A	-	Sk, Pe	Code 1 Gvl	Yes	N.W., Ind.	(3) F, N-12
Norway House Cree Nation FN	4,085	46	A	-	Sk, Pe	Code 1 Gvl	Yes	N.W., Ind.	(3) F, (2) N-8, 9-12
Opaskwayak Cree Nation (The Pas) FN	2,617	33	A	Yes	Sk, Pe, Br, Bv, Clm	Code 1 ashlt	-	N.W, Ind., IGA	FN, N-12
Pelican Rapids	123	49	A	-	-	-	-	-	F, N-9
Sapotaweyak Cree Nation FN	866	44	A	-	-	-	-	Ind.	FN, N-8
Pikwitonei	117	21	W	Yes	-	-	-	Ind.	F, N-9
Pinaymootang FN (Fairford)	1,155	69	A	-	-	-	-	Ind.	FN, N-12
Pine Dock	108	5	A	-	Nth	Gvl	-	Co-op	F, N-9
Poplar River FN	919	32	W	-	Nth	Code 1 Gvl	-	N.W.	FN, N-9
Princess Harbour	10	N/A	A	-	-	-	Yes	Ind.	-
Red Sucker Lake	33	12	W	-	Pe	Code 1 Gvl	-	N.W.	F, N-9

Legend

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W	Winter road

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*transportation figures based on scheduled stops

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Nth	Northway Aviation
Pim	Pimchikamak Air
Clm	Calm Air
Br	Bearskin Airlines
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Ashlt	Asphalt

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AD	Adult Education

			Transportation						Schools
Community	Estimated Community Population	% on S.A.	Road	Rail	Air*	Airstrip	Ferry/ Barge	Food Stores	Division/ Grades
Red Sucker Lake FN	707	94	W	-	Pe	Code 1 Gvl	-	N.W.	FN, N-12
Rock Ridge	76	25	A	-	-	-	-	-	-
Skownan FN (Waterhen)	539	51	A	-	-	-	-	Ind.	-
Salt Point	16	100+	A	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sayisi Dene FN (Tadoule Lake)	324	42	W	-	Sk, DC	Code 1 Gvl	-	N.W., Ind.	FN, N-12
Shamattawa FN	969	43	W	-	Pe, Clm	Code 2 Gvl	-	N.W., Ind.	FN, N-11
Sherridon	113	63	A	-	-	-	-	Ind.	F, N-9
South Indian Lake	808	1	W	-	Sk, Clm	Code 1 Gvl	Yes	Ind.	F, N-12
Spence Lake	44	30	A	-	-	-	-	-	-
St. Theresa Point FN	2,636	57	W	-	Sk	Code 1 Gvl	-	N.W.	FN, N-12
Tataskweyak Cree Nation (Split Lake) FN	1,809	45	A	-	-	-	Yes	N.W., Ind.	FN, N-12
The Pas MC	5,945	11	A	Yes	Clm, Br	Code 2 ashlt	-	N.W.	
Thicket Portage	137	64	W	Yes	-	-	-	Ind.	F, N-9
Thompson MC	14,385	11	A	Yes	Sk, Clm	Code 1 gvl, Code 2 ashlt	-	MSC	ML, K-12
Wabowden	497	24	A	Yes	-	-	-	Ind.	F, N-12
Wasagamack FN	1,241	66	W	-	-	-	-	N.W.	FN, N-12
Westgate	5	N/A	A	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wuskwi Sipihk FN (Indian Birch)	330	37	A	-	-	-	-	Ind.	FN, N-8
York Factory FN (York Landing)	436	43	W	-	Sk	Code 1	Yes	Ind.	FN, N-12

Legend

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*transportation figures based on scheduled stops

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Fe	Federal owned
N	Nursery
K	Kindergarten
AD	Adult Education
ML	Mystery Lake

Sources

First Nations Community Profiles 2001-02 – Manitoba Region, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

Profiles of Northern Affairs Communities 1998, Aboriginal and Northern Affairs

Direct telephone contact with listed airlines

Direct telephone/e-mail contact with Northwest Company

Direct telephone contact with Frontier School Division

Direct telephone contact with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

Other Suggestions from Stakeholder Feedback

Throughout the process of gathering information and stakeholder feedback, a number of additional suggestions were made. These are identified below with an explanation of why the suggestion was not developed as a strategic option by the Northern Food Prices Project.

- ***Build all-weather roads into all remote communities*** – All-weather road access to communities does contribute to lower freight costs and therefore lower food prices. However, decisions related to transportation access to remote communities are complex, long-term and require substantial funding from both the provincial and federal governments. This report does not attempt to recommend a specific action for the province to replace the winter roads (threatened by warm temperatures) with all-weather roads.
- ***Develop an airship industry to serve isolated northern communities*** – Manitoba is currently investigating the potential of an airship industry. The use of airships (dirigibles) could possibly provide a lower freight cost in comparison to fixed-wing aircraft. It is possible that airships could provide an alternative shipping system to winter roads for isolated communities. The airship industry in Manitoba does not currently exist and the actual costs are not known. However, there is potential requiring further consideration. To support this end, provincial and federal governments, industry and the Transport Institute held an international airships conference in Winnipeg on October 23-24, 2002. This report does not attempt to recommend a specific action for the province to take with regards to the airship industry.
- ***Establish a program of non-profit, government-run food stores that offer nutritious foods at lower cost*** – This idea would have a significant impact on the current retail marketplace. It is understood that the marketplace is multi-faceted and complex and the impact of establishing a competing government-run food store is unknown.
- ***Establish a system of selling milk at one price across the province*** – Milk is an important and healthy food but is not the only nutritious food that is needed in the diet. Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, meats, other milk products and staples are all important to northern citizens. In fact, there are controversial issues related to lactose intolerance that make the consumption of fluid milk problematic for many northern citizens, especially those of Aboriginal origin. The sensitivity to the lactose in milk provides challenges for individuals, and families as well as nutrition and health professionals. In addition, many Aboriginal people do not see the consumption of milk as important to their traditional eating habits.
- ***Fluid milk is the most expensive form of milk to ship and supply to customers because of its weight, packaging and refrigeration requirements.*** There are other forms of milk such as Ultra High Temperature (UHT), canned milk, powdered milk, and milk crystals that many northerners choose to purchase. Considering these issues, the Northern Food Prices Project Steering Committee believe it would be inappropriate to focus government dollars on fluid milk alone. The Milk Price Review in Northern Communities option, recommended by the Northern Food Prices Project deals with milk pricing in a different way.
- ***Support and re-establishment of home economics school programs in all northern schools*** – This idea came out frequently during discussion related to nutrition and cultural foods education, food preparation and preservation, food safety and handling. The home economics program also contributes to education related to money management and food purchase choices. The community-based approach to food self-sufficiency and the school/community partnership approach to

all proposed strategic options would also support the need for home economics food labs and other programs. Decisions related to school curriculum and programming are complex, long-term, require substantial funding and were not considered within the realm of the Northern Food Prices Project mandate.

- ***The province partners with northern organizations to establish a non-profit trucking company that freights nutritious foods at lower than current industry rates*** – The Northern Food Prices Project recognizes the importance of competition in the marketplace. Increased competition in the freight industry may help to lower freight costs to food retailers, and therefore lower retail prices. The suggestion to establish a not-for-profit trucking company may be a venture that northern stakeholder organizations may wish to investigate. Such a venture would then be encouraged to apply for and work with existing programs that would be able to assist in business planning and arranging financing.

- ***Northern consumers should be encouraged to choose lower-cost powdered and/or crystallized milk products*** – Powdered milk has been available in the north for many years. Customer acceptance is varied and is different in each community. Crystal milk is a new form of dehydrated milk that seems to have an acceptable degree of acceptance in southern institutions and may have some potential for customer sales in northern Manitoba. Another milk product that might be used more is Ultra High Temperature (UHT) milk. Use of these alternate forms of milk could reduce a family's retail cost of milk in comparison to purchasing fluid milk. Stakeholder feedback also indicated that taste-testing of these 'new' products would help customers determine acceptability. This idea has been suggested and incorporated into the Northern Food Retail Incentive option.

- ***Increase minimum wage and social assistance rates to help offset the high cost to purchase nutritious foods*** – It was the intention of the Northern Food Prices Project to find options that could reduce the retail price of nutritious foods. These options would benefit all northern people including, but not limited to income assistance clients. Therefore, options were investigated that might help lower income families in their struggle to purchase nutritious foods on a regular basis. In addition, the Northern Food Price Survey Program option is designed to provide credible, valid data that substantiates actual food costs in each northern community.

- ***Support school nutrition programs such as lunch, breakfast and snack programs*** – These types of programs were mentioned by a variety of stakeholders as good ways to help teach healthy eating habits and to provide nutritious foods at low or no cost to children. There are a variety of programs and funding structures for schools should they choose to implement such programs. It is not known by the Northern Food Prices Project whether they are adequate at this time. The Northern Food Prices Project would encourage further investigation of such programs by all northern stakeholders. The movement in schools to develop and implement healthy food policies is timely and northern stakeholders are encouraged to support these initiatives as well.

- ***Establish a Super Agency for the North*** – with a trust fund that has the authority and ability to generate programs for northern community and economic development. The Northern Food Prices Project did not have the time, resources or capacity to investigate this idea further. However, this could be considered within the context of the Northern Food Business Development option should there be sufficient support to do so.

- ***Freight and/or food subsidy offered at times when winter roads are not useable*** – There has been precedence for an emergency subsidy from government. This occurred when the winter weather was too warm and winter roads could not be built or used by remote communities. The Northern Food Prices Project did not have the time, resources or capacity to investigate this idea further. However, this idea could be investigated within the context of the Northern Freight Rate Reduction option, should there be sufficient support to do so.

Detailed Strategic Option Descriptions

Prioritized Strategic Options #1-7

Notes/Key for the Criteria/Guidelines Chart found after each detailed description

Specific Issues Resolved/Type of Benefit

- extremely high food prices
- acceptance/non-acceptance of milk
- lack of awareness of healthy food and lifestyle choices
- limited availability of nutritious foods
- transportation challenges – large distances
- distribution system challenges – storage, warehousing, product shelf life
- lack of competition
- food production potential
- food processing potential
- food retailing potential
- variability and differences amongst northern communities
- disposable income available to purchase nutritious foods
- nutritious indigenous and alternate foods

Community Type that benefits

- RWA – remote with winter access roads acceptability and support.
- RA – remote with all-weather road or rail access
- R – reserve community
- NACC – Northern Association of Community Councils member community
- MC – municipal corporation – larger/less isolated

Community need re: highest food prices

- H – high
- M – medium
- L – low

Holistic approach – components

- use of partnerships
- networking
- use of existing resources
- reaches all citizens in northern Manitoba
- provides equity with programs/services/policies with southern Manitoba
- includes education and awareness re: food, nutrition and wellness choices
- provides economic development opportunity
- provides opportunities for youth/children
- provides community input from those who will be affected

Ease of Implementation

- not complex: one partner can make the decision; little or no new funding required; minimal long-term monitoring or evaluation required; can be introduced into existing program/system/job function etc; relates directly to the partner's existing mandate; a model/template exists.
- moderately complex: multi-party partnership; requires new program funding but is within existing known funding mandates; compliments partners' mandates; a model or template exists.
- complex: requires extensive multi-party negotiation; new program funding; large funding needs; long-term funding; required; significant research and analysis required prior to decision to implement; complex evaluation required.

Note: evaluate also – perceived public and political

Note: Options can be grouped:

1. Local Food Provision
2. Consumer Rebate or Incentive
3. Systems Factors

Prioritized Strategic Option #1 – Local Food Provision: Northern Food Self-Sufficiency Initiative

Description:

This option combines the two different options studied in the Northern Food Prices Project – the Northern Food Self-Sufficiency Re-Discovery Project and the Northern Food Self-Sufficiency Awareness Initiative. This option provides a comprehensive strategy to build local food provision activity and capacity in the north. As food is produced, harvested and/or processed locally, the cost of food may be reduced by replacing the imported product with a local food supply. Components of this option include:

- Consulting with northern stakeholders in all aspects of this initiative.
- Gathering research and information about producing food in the north.
- Development of a best practises guidelines for producing, processing and marketing food in northern Manitoba.
- Development of the community asset mapping tool that will assist communities identify their knowledge, skills, resources, and will to become more self-sufficient in their community food supply.
- Delivery of a series of conferences, workshops and community sharing sessions over a period of five years focussed on building community capacity for food self-sufficiency.
- Within two years, identifying and outlining the details for a new program on food self-sufficiency as determined by community input and participation.

Goals:

- To develop the best practises guidelines for producing, processing and marketing food in northern Manitoba.
- To develop a community asset mapping tool for use by communities in their goals to have a more self-sufficient food supply.
- To have community leaders, champions, elders and citizens participate in the identification of needs related to new programming, service and support for northern food production, processing and retailing.
- To integrate the various and complex issues related to high food prices into the study and programming for northern food self-sufficiency.
- To establish a consortium of northern stakeholders and deliver a series of conferences, workshops and inter-community sharing over a five-year period.
- To design and implement new government programming needed to support local food self-sufficiency in northern and remote communities.

Outcomes:

- All northern and remote communities have increased self-sufficiency in local food provision over a period of five to 20 years resulting in lower costs for nutritious foods in each community.
- Northern citizens' food choices/purchases show an increase in the amount of nutritious foods that assist them in combating health issues such as diabetes, heart health and obesity.
- Details related to new programming are developed based on community-identified need and implemented to provide ongoing support to northern food self-sufficiency.

Initiative Components:

The principle of partnership with the federal and provincial governments and northern stakeholders is integral to this initiative. One new staff person (northern food self-sufficiency manager), working for five years with Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives. It is important this position be located in the north, probably in the Thompson. This is necessary to establish the credibility of food provision in the north and to begin the process of capacity building at the community level. This staff person will be responsible for the outcomes of this project:

1. Consulting with northern stakeholders in all aspects of this initiative:
   - Northern stakeholder organizations, community leaders, champions and citizens participate in the identification of needs related to new programming, service and support for northern food production, processing and retailing.
   - This option is seen as the follow-up to the Northern Food Prices Project.
2. Gathering of research, information and knowledge related to producing food in northern Manitoba:
   - Build on and flesh out the knowledge learned from the Northern Food Prices Project about issues of self-sufficiency in northern communities.
   - Investigate and evaluate agri-food development programs in other northern jurisdictions such as Nunavut, NWT, Yukon and Iceland.
   - Gather the significant research and study of farming and food business alternatives and potential for northern Manitoba.
   - Describe and promote past and current experiences, northern community success stories and potential ideas to northern citizens in the area of food self-sufficiency, how this can lower food prices locally, and the importance of making nutritious foods more accessible and nutritious food choices more frequent.
   - Consult with various community leaders, entrepreneurs, schools, nutrition and health personal, local food businesses, provincial and federal government departments and other stakeholders.
   - Develop this knowledge base in support of the Northern Greenhouse Pilot Project and the Northern Gardens Program options.
3. Development of best practises guidelines for producing food in northern Manitoba:
   - Develop best practises guidelines for farming and food businesses in Manitoba's northern and remote areas.
   - Develop the concept and process of asset mapping that can be used to identify food self-sufficiency potential on a community-by-community basis.
   - Develop models and templates of successful food self-sufficiency activities that can be shared and used by other communities.
4. Development of the community asset mapping tool for use by communities in their goals to have a more self-sufficient food supply:
   - Design a community asset mapping tool focussed on food self-sufficiency. This tool will assist communities to identify the skills, knowledge, resources and will be available within the community to initiate food self-sufficiency activity.
5. For a period of five years, delivery of a series of conferences and community sharing events focussed on food self-sufficiency in northern and remote communities:
   - Annually for two to three years, an educational conference/event be will held with the focus on northern food prices, costs, nutrition, health and food security. Much of the information gathered in relation to the Northern Food Prices Project would be presented to a larger audience of northern citizens.
   - These conferences/events could be delivered provincially or regionally. Location would be determined by easy access for northern community participants.
   - For the remaining two to three years of the initiative, a process of inter-community sharing and education will be developed and co-ordinated. Inter-community sharing will encourage the further development of successful community-based food self-sufficiency activities, ventures, and programs throughout the region and province. Leaders of successful ventures/programs will be encouraged, trained and supported to be the Train-the-Trainer resource person. Initiative funds will cover the cost of travel, community meetings/workshops, and informational resources needed to accomplish the sharing and education

- These initiatives will describe and promote past and current experiences, northern community success stories and potential ideas to northern citizens in the areas of food self-sufficiency, how this can lower food prices locally and the importance of making nutritious foods more accessible and nutritious food choices more frequent.
- Northern stakeholder and community feedback that will assist in the design of the proposed new food self-sufficiency program and other self-sufficiency initiatives.
- These events will provide interaction and workshops that build the capacity of participating communities to take action and to co-operate with neighbouring communities.
- The conferences/events and inter-community sharing will focus on community-based needs, success stories and potential solutions to issues.
- Conferences/events will have significant workshop/interactive and back home components to ensure community participation and sharing.
- Conferences/events and sharing will be delivered by northern stakeholders for northern people.
- Conference themes and workshops will recognize and build upon existing programming and training for First Nation (FN) and non-aboriginal people in the area of food security and food provision.
- The approach to food self-sufficiency initiatives will be through a community-based model utilizing community asset mapping process to identify capacity, potential and challenges. Note: There is a recognition and acknowledgement that FN and NACC communities sometimes choose to work independently despite the proximity.
- Topics of each conference/event would provide information and potential solutions to the following issues:
    - high food prices in comparison to southern Manitoba
    - acceptance/non-acceptance of milk as a beverage of choice – competing beverages are often of low nutritional value; lactose intolerance
    - issues related to healthy food and lifestyle choices
    - high incidence of obesity, diabetes and nutrient deficiencies
    - limited availability of nutritious foods
    - transportation challenges; large distances between communities
    - distribution system challenges; requirements for storage/warehousing and product shelf life
    - lack of competition and market size in the wholesale and retail marketplace
    - food production potential and limitations
    - food processing potential and limitations
    - food retailing potential and limitations
    - variability and differences amongst northern communities such as road access, degree of isolation, available retail competition
    - nutritious indigenous and alternate foods, country foods and traditional foods
    - disposable income available to purchase food
- A consortium of stakeholders will provide the leadership for the planning and delivery of the events and will seek the appropriate funding sources. Provincial government's role is to facilitate the process.
- Conference planning and participation would be encouraged from:
    - First Nations tribal councils and leadership organizations
    - Manitoba Metis Federation
    - Northern Forest Diversification Centre
    - Northern Association of Community Councils

  - municipal corporations and chambers of commerce
  - Norman and north central regional development corporations
  - Communities Economic Development Fund
  - community economic development agencies
  - Frontier School Division, other northern schools and Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre
  - North West Company and other food retailers
  - Arctic Co-operatives Ltd.
  - First Nations buying group
  - trucking companies
  - Northern and Aboriginal Population Health and Wellness Institute
  - provincial and federal government departments including Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, Manitoba Family Services and Housing, Manitoba Health, Healthy Child Manitoba, Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, Manitoba Advanced Education and Training, Manitoba Industry, Trade and Mines, Health Canada, First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Western Diversification, and others.
- Invitations will be extended to Nunavut and NWT to partner and to participate both as observers and contributors.
- Various interested stakeholders will volunteer or be appointed to a conference planning team to aid in development of an event that is client-friendly and provides information and workshops that satisfy community-based needs.

6. Identify and outline the details for a new programming on northern food self-sufficiency that will focus on community-based food production, processing, country/wild foods and other food self-sufficiency initiatives.
   - Work with individual communities to define what food self-sufficiency means for them, their interest and need for food self-sufficiency, and programming gaps and needs.
   - Consult with various northern stakeholder organizations, community leaders, entrepreneurs, schools, nutrition and health personnel, local food businesses, provincial and federal government departments, and other stakeholders.
   - Based on community input, design and describe new programming that will stimulate local food production, gathering, processing and marketing.
   - Identify and describe all new human and financial resources that would be required to implement new programming.
   - Outline the program details related to who will be responsible and will fund the program; partnering organizations and agencies; program structure, co-ordination, and delivery methods; any new staff development and training needs; ongoing community participation; community education and training needed.

Partners:

- Province of Manitoba provides Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives with a new five-year term staff year and operational dollars to complete the project co-ordination, delivery, and management.

- Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives works co-operatively with Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, Northern Association of Community Councils, Manitoba Metis Federation and other northern organizations to complete the requirements of the project.

- Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs provides office space located in northern Manitoba and support staff for the project.

- Indian and Northern Affairs Canada would be invited to provide project funding to support the project. Project funding would include the costs associated with major northern conferences/events.

- Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, Tribal Councils, MMF, NACC, ANA and INAC provide leadership, support and guidance to identify new programming that will stimulate local food production, gathering and processing and will satisfy local labour force and community economic development programming and funding needs.
- Northern stakeholders and communities will identify the need and work co-operatively with neighbouring communities.
- Regional health authorities, Northern and Aboriginal Population Health and Wellness Institute, food retailers, as well as MMF, MKO, tribal councils, NACC and community health and education staff provide input as to community-based nutrition educational programs needed to complement a new program in food self-sufficiency.

Benefits:

- Northern community input and participation begins the process of capacity building in the area of food self-sufficiency.
- Significant progress towards building self-reliance and self-esteem in northern communities by reducing the dependency on the south for all of its food supply.
- Increased awareness and attention to the importance of food self-sufficiency and the need for reasonable food prices for northern citizens.
- Allows for sufficient time, planning and stakeholder input to develop new programming that will meet needs identified by northern citizens.
- Resources dedicated to the increase in knowledge, understanding and sharing of the best practises for producing and processing food in the north and remote communities.
- Resources dedicated to the planning and delivery of major educational and interactive conference/event(s) that will increase knowledge and awareness and partnerships with northern stakeholders and citizens.
- Long-term commitment from governments to provide extension education, support and follow-up to northern food provision capacity.

Challenges:

- Various jurisdictional barriers related to serving Aboriginal, Metis and non-Aboriginal client groups.
- Some negative experiences related to farming still remain from the boarding-school period of history.
- Northern communities will need to demonstrate their need and then support the initiative.
- Difficult to quantify the impact on retail food prices resulting from this Initiative. The Northern Food Price Survey Project will be needed to help monitor prices over time.
- Long-term solution requiring significant short-term investments by all stakeholders.

Costs – estimated:

Annual:	
• northern food self-sufficiency manager	
- salary and benefits	$ 75,000
- travel and expenses	$ 20,000
• office, technology and administrative support	$ 5,000
• conferences/events (federal/provincial co-funding)	$ 80,000
Total costs	$180,000

Note: The following are considerations for a potential new northern food self-sufficiency program that have been discussed and recommended:

- Food self-sufficiency is focussed on making nutritious foods more accessible and affordable for northern citizens.
- Food self-sufficiency may include greenhouses; use of abandoned mines for food production; individual, community or entrepreneurial gardens; local bakery business; powdered milk reconstitution; fish packing/processing; small livestock farms and meat processing, commu-

nity hunter support programs, use of native plant species and others identified by the community.

- Development of a process by which knowledge and research related to best practice guidelines for farming and food businesses in northern and remote areas continues to be developed and shared.
- Identification of potential funding sources within existing programs.
- Use of youth employment funding from the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement with MMF and AMC.
- Strong commitment to working one-on-one with individual food producers and helping them market their products either individually, as a co-operative or an association. Where appropriate, facilitate the tie to Arctic Co-operatives Ltd., for the long-term network and support for co-ops.
- Tap into northern expertise for food production, processing, business models, marketing; including successful government–sponsored programs.
- Facilitate and build networks amongst northern stakeholders, business and communities where possible.
- Build in business transition strategies to encourage long-term solutions. These include staff positions, training, inventory, apprenticeship programs, youth employment, etc.
- High school youth have access to food self-sufficiency education, possibly through a school credit or the technology education school program, in which they gain the knowledge and learn the skills for food production and/or processing in northern Manitoba. A technical education school program is a cluster of eight to 14 courses that are approved by the department. The student gets a certificate upon completion; there is a related $5,000 grant from Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth.
- Investigate possibilities for having school-based businesses such as a bakery or greenhouse, which provides the technical education business and technical training, as well as in-house apprenticeships plus cash income opportunities to the school program.
- Possible youth employment opportunities to be made available in relation to summer and student jobs with community-based self-sufficiency projects.
- Education and awareness of nutrition, healthy food choices and lifestyle in relation to food self-sufficiency for nutritious foods.
- Communities have technical support, available locally to assist them in generating ideas, initiating and managing projects/businesses, finding the relevant research and technical information and technologies, building leadership potential and other community identified needs.
- Business, management and employee training for food-based enterprises as well as after-care services to micro-enterprises.

Evaluation by Criteria and Guidelines: Northern Food Self-sufficiency Initiative

Immediate/ Intermediate/ Long-term	Specific Issue(s) Targeted/ Type of Benefit	Comm. Type that benefits	Comm. Need	Community-based components
Immediate 2003	- food production potential - food processing potential - food retailing potential - high food prices - availability of nutritious foods - transportation costs - variability and differences of communities - disposable income - country foods	All		- northern food conference/ event provides interactive process of discovery of what communities need/want for food self-sufficiency - in-depth consultation for a term of one year to ensure strong northern and Aboriginal input into new program design

Holistic approach components	Meets Goal of: NDS, HCM, INAC, HC (FNIHB), MB Health, Nutrition/health, community	Ease of Implement./ Existing model or template	Estimated Cost of Implement. - start-up - maintain	Pilot Project – y/n - workable - sustainable Cautionary Notes
- partnerships - all citizens - equity with southern Manitoba - education re: health, nutrition, and food choices - economic development - youth component - community input	NDS HCM INAC HC (FNIHB) Nutrition/health Community Manitoba Health	- moderately complex - new project funding required	1-year project costs: ~$180,000 new program costs: to be established in the Discovery project	Pilot project - yes - workable: community-based input plus adequate time and resources to design new program - sustainable: new program will require long-term funding, commitment and community support
			- template, model and ideas available from other jurisdictions	Cautionary Notes: - expectation that a new program will be established and funded - reminder of past programs that have been discontinued, i.e., MAFRI Horticulture and Frontier School Nutrition Advisor programs

Prioritized Strategic Option # 2 – Systems Factors: Milk Price Review in Northern Communities

Description:

The Manitoba Milk Price Review Commission (MMPRC) will apply procedures currently used in southern Manitoba to review the cost of milk in the north and set appropriate maximum prices. This option will increase the commission's mandate to evaluate prices to include the price of two and four litre fluid milk, UHT, tetra brick milk, canned milk, and lactose-reduced milk products in addition to the current one litre fluid milk.

Goals:

- To extend the current milk price regulations to northern Manitoba.
- To enhance the Milk Price Review Commission's mandate to set maximum prices for one, two, and four litre fluid milk, UHT milk, canned milk, and lactose-reduced milk products in northern Manitoba.

Outcomes:

- A monitored and controlled cost of retail milk prices in northern Manitoba.

Program Components:

- The MMPRC will expand its systems of research, analysis and regulation for the maximum price of milk to all northern communities. There is no apparent reason for the current program to stop at the current arbitrary boundary.
- In northern Manitoba, milk price review will be extended to two and four litre quantities of milk (92 per cent of all fluid milk in Manitoba is sold in these quantities while only eight per cent is sold in one litre cartons).
- In northern Manitoba, milk price review will be extended to one litre containers of UHT, Tetra Pack milk and other sizes should they become available as well as canned milk and lactose-reduced milk products.
- Should new staff position(s) be required to implement this option, the new employee(s) should be hired from, trained and continue to work in a northern location. Potential sharing of office space and support to be negotiated with a government department and/or Regional Housing Authority (RHA) with office locations in the north.
- Semi-annual food pricing of a nutritious northern food basket should be implemented. This will serve the purpose of community-based monitoring of milk products prices, as well as other purposes, as outlined in the Northern Food Price Survey Program option.
- *Notes:* This option is not meant to enforce price parity with southern communities. There is no guarantee that milk prices will go down as a result of this option. But factual knowledge about a fair price for milk products will be gained and monitored. It is recognized that the milk producer price is unaffected by this option.

Partners:

- Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, Minister and departmental input and approval required.
- Manitoba Milk Prices Review Commission to approve, design, and implement the option.
- Co-operation from food retailers, distributors, wholesalers and freighters is essential in order to provide the accurate calculation of costs for each community.
- A multi-party partnership of MKO, MMF, RHA and NACC, Municipalities and Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives to co-operate in the regular monitoring and reporting of milk prices to ensure compliance to price regulation. This responsibility could be integrated into the responsibilities of the Manitoba Food Price Survey Consortium as described in the Northern Food Price Survey Program option.

Benefits:

- Milk price regulation research and procedures are well established and implemented in southern Manitoba. This option builds on these existing resources.
- There is no impact with this option, to the portion of the formula related to the price paid to milk producers. New research, formulas, and calculations will be needed for the costs associated with transportation, warehousing, distribution and retail sale of the various milk sizes and forms in northern communities.
- Recognition that there is no simple comparison of northern milk prices with the south.
- New staff resources may not be needed if the emphasis of the commission is shifted to the areas of the province, northern Manitoba, where competition in the marketplace is currently not controlling the price of milk as it is in the south.

Challenges:

- Legislative/regulatory changes required to change Manitoba Milk Review Commission's mandate beyond the one litre fluid milk product.
- New roles and responsibilities for the commission related to working with northern retailers, wholesale and transport companies.
- New roles and responsibilities for the commission related to the additional milk products to be included. These products have different stakeholders than the fluid milk market and include out-of-province processors and supplies.

Costs:

- New Manitoba Milk Price Review Commission staff resources and operational costs, if needed, are $80,000.
- Volunteer time in all northern communities to complete an annual or semi-annual food pricing as outlined in the Northern Food Price Survey Program option.

Evaluation by Criteria and Guidelines: Milk Price Review in Northern Communities

Immediate/ Intermediate/ Long-term	Specific Issue(s) Targeted/ Type of Benefit	Comm. Type that benefits	Comm. Need	Community-based components
Immediate	- high milk prices - variability and differences in communities	All	L H	- community-based milk price monitoring provided by semi-annual food pricing initiative
	Maximum price of milk be established for one, two, four litre jugs, UHT milk and canned milk - the units commonly sold in stores			

Holistic approach components	Meets Goal of: NDS, HCM, INAC, HC (FNIHB), MB Health, Nutrition/health, community	Ease of Implement./ Existing model or template	Estimated Cost of Implement. - start-up - maintain	Pilot Project – y/n - workable - sustainable Cautionary Notes
- use of existing resources - all citizens - equity - partnerships - employment opportunity	HCM	- not complex	Estimated 1 – 1.5 additional staff years plus northern office and operational expenses	Pilot – yes To provide new market testing of research, data and process prior to implementation into more complex marketplace
		- perceived public and political support		Cautionary Notes: - expectations that milk prices will go down may be false - does not deal with lactose intolerance and non-traditional food

Prioritized Strategic Option # 3– Local Food Provision: Northern Food Business Development

Description:

To reduce the reliance on food imported from the south, this option promotes and supports businesses that produce, process and market foods in the north. Examples of such businesses: bakery, greenhouse, gardens, country/wild foods, small livestock farms, food retail co-operatives, etc. The types of additional support needed:

- A focus and emphasis by all community and economic development program, service, and funding agencies on these types of businesses, which tend to be micro-enterprises in size and function, in northern communities.
- Increased visibility and awareness of northern food issues at conferences, events and training programs.
- Targeted funding, training and support services.
- The development of northern/remote community economic development models, which are different than current accepted principles; youth focussed development and training; partnerships with local retailers in the marketing and sale of products.

Goals:

- To review all business, community and economic development policies, procedures and programs and then make necessary changes that will enhance the development of community-based food businesses in northern and remote communities.
- To develop northern and remote community-friendly food business plan templates that will assist micro-food based businesses to develop and prosper.

Outcomes:

- Increased establishment and success of micro-food based businesses in each northern and remote community that will contribute to lower food costs for citizens.

Components:

- A consortium of stakeholders (see partners) will gather together, led by the Communities Economic Development Fund, to take a hard look at existing programs and make the necessary changes and improvements to existing community, business and economic development programs as outlined in this option.
- Community asset mapping will be used to identify food self-sufficiency potential, challenges and development needs on a community-by-community basis.
- All existing community and economic development programs and funding agencies serving northern and Aboriginal clients, will collaborate and make adjustments to policies, procedures and programs. The follow-up after care for micro-enterprise development is a critical component for these programs as are appropriate and accessible funding and business transition strategies.
- The adjustment will be to facilitate the development of local businesses (micro, small and medium sized) and activities that take a people-centred approach in producing or processing nutritious foods locally. Communities will be encouraged to envision what is possible in the area of food businesses plus provided with direct support to the development of viable business plans.
- One-on-one pathfinding and support is extremely important. This includes introducing new business opportunities; helping to develop the business strategy; providing business plan templates that work in northern and remote communities; flexible, simple and quick funding; help in developing markets and selling product; food development research and resources.
- Additional networks, technical support and contacts will be needed to accomplish the pathfinding and facilitation role needed for these types of businesses, activities and events to be successful.

- New business plan templates need to be developed that adequately reflect doing micro-business in northern communities and facilitate funding applications.
- Emphasis to be placed on nutritious food businesses such as:
  - bread products from a commercial bakery for breads, bannock and other nutritious baked products
  - fresh fruits and vegetables from a greenhouse and/or gardens
  - local country/wild foods harvesting and processing such as berries, native grains, fish, teas, wild rice, etc.
  - livestock farms
  - community-based co-operatives that retail and/or wholesale nutritious foods along with other products; food buying co-ops
  - business networks
  - youth-focussed business development training, employment and apprenticeships in local food businesses. Where appropriate, school based food businesses such as a bakery or greenhouse, can be investigated. Facilitation of Junior Achievement aboriginal youth business programs
  - food management, food safety and quality training required
  - businesses can be either individual entrepreneurs or community owned co-operatives
- Local retailers are consulted and partner in the program by purchasing locally whenever possible.
- Numerous business and community economic development funding programs to be reviewed and identified as priority fund sources for community-based initiatives.
- Manitoba Industry, Trade and Mines and Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs to share with various government departments, their experience and knowledge about the unique aspects and principles of business development in remote northern communities.
- Arctic Co-operatives Ltd. (ACL) to be encouraged and supported as an umbrella network for community-based co-ops. ACL can provide the much needed long-term support, management and employee training, HR and accounting services, strategic business planning and group buying power for individual co-ops in the north.
- Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives' new Aboriginal Agricultural Initiatives Co-ordinator's job description has had 30-50 per cent of time dedicated to working with northern producers (*Northern Development Strategy*). This portion of time should be outlined as departmental support to northern food production, processing and retailing development. This position will also be responsible for learning about and sharing the unique aspects and principles of food production and business development in remote northern communities, which is significantly different than for the agri-food industries in agro-Manitoba.
- Business, management, and employee training to be focussed and prioritized for these new food based-businesses and co-ops. Cooperative funding across several jurisdictions (provinces and territories) will assist industry partners such as Arctic Co-operatives Ltd. and North West Company to establish and deliver industry-based training related to store and business management. These are critical skills needed to help deal with the high cost of doing business in the north.
- Canada-Manitoba Business Service Centre will develop new resources that describe food business models and business plan templates that are suitable to northern and remote communities.
- Sharing of the potential and opportunities for the development of a northern food sector will be incorporated into all economic development conferences and events. This would include Rural Forum, Community Futures, CEDnet events, Focus North Practitioners Conference and conferences proposed in the Northern Food Self-sufficiency Initiative.

Partners:

- Communities Economic Development Fund to champion and facilitate this option.
- Northern Forest Diversification Centre to collaborate and provide direction and support. This agency has significant research, knowledge and experience in the development of community-based, people centred, micro-enterprise development in northern Manitoba.
- Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, MMF, NACC and tribal councils to provide direction and support to the adjustments needed to existing funding and service programs.
- Funding agencies – to be identified, contacted and asked to prioritize funding requests – provincial, federal and industry.
- Small Business and Co-operative Development to provide additional support to northern communities in the development of community owned co-ops and businesses.
- Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives' new Aboriginal Agricultural Initiatives Co-ordinator initiative provides direct support to northern food-based production and processing initiatives.
- Food Development Centre provides support, consultation and service in the development of new food products for commercial use.
- INAC and the Wi-Chi-Way-Win Capital Corporation to collaborate by providing liaison to all federally-run and funded programs.
- Manitoba Conservation to collaborate and participate in all food ventures related to using indigenous species.
- Frontier School Division, Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre, other northern schools, Junior Achievement and the 4-H Program provide input and guidance as to in-school small business education, training and apprenticeship opportunities for high school youth.

Benefits:

- Where practical, locally produced foods will replace higher cost foods transported into the community. This honours food production and food businesses as a viable sector for northern communities.
- Local economic and community development and employment opportunities are provided direct and individual support.
- Emphasis on and ownership of local nutritious food businesses will provide focus to making nutritious food choices and helps to increase community food security.
- Utilization of existing funding sources that may require significant adjustments and prioritization.
- Utilization of existing co-op support networks.
- Some community-based food business may develop food products that become profitable through niche market sales to southern communities. This can provide back-haul opportunities for transport companies and thereby reduce the cost of transporting other food products into the community.
- Youth education and training in the field of food businesses.

Challenges:

- It can be difficult to change existing policies, procedures, programs, and services – i.e., issues related to regulations, jurisdictional responsibilities, equity with other groups/regions, etc.

Costs:

- Additional human resources needed in the co-operative development work group (IAF) to adequately support northern initiatives.
- Additional human resources needed in Communities Economic Development Fund to facilitate and lead these efforts.

Evaluation by Criteria and Guidelines: Northern Food Business Development

Immediate/ Intermediate/ Long-term	Specific Issue(s) Targeted/ Type of Benefit	Comm. Type that benefits	Comm. Need	Community-based components
Immediate Intermediate	- high food prices - availability of nutritious foods - transportation costs - distribution costs - competition - food production - food processing - food retailing - variability and differences in communities - country foods	All	High	- northern and Aboriginal organizations provide significant direction as to community-based economic development principles and practises for remote communities - focus on community-driven and local food sector ventures
				- encourages co-op business in development - promotes small entrepreneurs

Holistic approach components	Meets Goal of: NDS, HCM, INAC, HC (FNIHB), MB Health, Nutrition/health, community	Ease of Implement./ Existing model or template	Estimated Cost of Implement. - start-up - maintain	Pilot Project – y/n - workable - sustainable Cautionary Notes
- partnerships - networking - use existing resources - all citizens - opportunities for youth - community input from those to be impacted - economic development - consistent with First Nations governance strategies	NDS INAC Community	Moderately complex: - conceptual change is more difficult to implement - no new dollars designated - no template or model readily available	- at least one new staff year needed to provide the leadership, co-ordination and support - adjustment to existing resources	Pilot project - no - sustainability depends on dedicated leadership and co-ordination
		- politically acceptable - bureaucratic barriers to change/ adding pressures to existing resources - publicly acceptable based on stakeholder involvement		Cautionary Notes: - could be perceived as an insubstantial recommendation since there is no new dollars, resources or programming - statistically, most businesses do not survive the first three years

Prioritized Strategic Option # 4 – Local Food Provision: Northern Community Foods Program

Description:

There are successful community-based traditional activities that help to make traditional foods available to all members of the community. These activities/programs are based on the cultural tradition of sharing. Generally, local hunters or fishermen volunteer to hunt or fish for geese, moose, caribou or fish and then donate the food to the community. The community leadership supports the financial costs and provides for an organized way of storing and distributing the food to people who request it.

The Community Foods Program option will promote this concept with various interested communities and if needed, will provide annual grants to support the costs.

Goals:

- To assist communities in developing a more formalized system supporting the cultural tradition of sharing when there is an abundance of foods.
- To educate northern citizens in the nutritional value of country/wild foods in their diets.

Outcomes:

- Increased quantities of local foods are available for Elders and others in the community who are less able to hunt, gather, or fish for their own food supply.
- Increased awareness and pride in cultural traditions related to food.
- Increased nutritional knowledge and practices.

Program Content:

- MKO, SERDC, NACC and MMF will coordinate and promote informal workshops/events each year for a period of three to five years that provide opportunities for people to share their ideas and success stories and to learn how to implement their own community foods programs. The purpose will be to encourage and support more community foods programs in new communities throughout the north; for communities to learn mentoring skills that will help them teach and mentor communities in establishing their own community foods initiatives.
- Community food workshops/events can be incorporated into the annual events as outlined in the Northern Food Self-sufficiency Initiative.
- These events will focus on how communities have successfully implemented programs such as community hunting/fishing/gathering programs. Food safety, handling, preservation and nutrition education will be important components of such programs.
- Community asset mapping will be used to identify community interest and capacity to establish an organized community foods program.
- Community leaders, staff, schools and volunteers from all northern communities will be invited to these events to learn and share in the ideas.
- INAC will be invited to fund the sharing workshops/events for a period of three to five years.
- Program funds from an appropriate funding source will be designated for start up and annual operating costs of country foods programs.
- Manitoba Conservation and Northern Forest Diversification Centre provide guidance, information and support for the sustainable use of wild plants, game, fish and plant resources.
- Training of youth becomes an important component. Skills in harvesting, cleaning, preserving and cooking wild foods as well as the cultural aspects of sharing and using local foods can be incorporated into a local 4-H program (see Northern Youth Leadership Training Initiative option).

Here is an example of a successful community foods model from York Factory First Nations in York Landing. There are three important parts to the program – Hunter Support, Distribution Centre and Cultural Camps:

- Distribution centre: a Band-owned building provides the location for four to five community freezers, a place for wild game to be dressed, cut up, packaged and stored.
  - Seepastik Development Corporation funds the salary for a local person to manage and maintain the distribution centre.
  - Any person wanting to donate wild game to the community or who asks for meat from the Centre is free to do so and contacts this person to make arrangements.
- Hunter support: local hunters volunteer to travel to York Factory or Churchill to hunt for wild geese or caribou for the community.
  - The Band Council or Seepastik Development Corporation pays for the cost of the plane and fuel (and sometimes the bullets) for the community hunters.
  - At any time throughout the year, hunters and fishermen donate wild game to the distribution centre. Sharing food in this manner is very much part of the culture and is supported by the chief and council and the community.
  - The wild geese hunt occurs in the spring and the fall. York Factory First Nations would like to be contacted if other First Nations groups might be interested in also doing a community hunt of the wild geese in the York Factory and Churchill area. Manitoba Conservation has indicated there is an abundance of wild geese populations at this time.
- Cultural camps: In May or June, York Factory First Nations holds a two-week cultural camp to teach participants how to dress out wild game – pluck, singe, gut and cut up the meat.
  - Each day, fishermen catch and provide fish for the camp.
  - The day camp is within walking distance from York Landing near the waterside.
  - Children and adults participate in the camp. It is like a community festival.
  - Children are then able to help their mothers and grandmothers to pluck and clean geese and dress out wild game.
  - Elders also teach about the importance of community sharing.
  - Other fun activities are organized such as making whistles from tree branches, making bannock, square dancing and jigging.
  - Seepasik Development Corporation pays salaries for workers to cook, chop wood and haul water for each day of the camp.
- Contact in York Landing is: Rebecca Beardy, Health and Social Services, York Factory First Nations phone at 1-204-341-2180 and Flora Beardy, Cultural Director, Seepastik Development Corporation phone at 1-204-341-2236.

Another component of community foods programs can be the establishment of providing traditional foods such as moose, fish, caribou, etc., as a regular menu item in local hospitals and nutrition programs. A successful model in the Yukon, called the Traditional Diet Program, manages to deal with federal health and safety regulations that permits the food safety inspection, best practices in food handling, and use of wild game donated by First Nations hunters. This is an alliance between the Yukon Hospital Corporation, Yukon First Nations, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, and the Yukon provincial departments of Renewable Resources and Nutrition and Food Services. Contact is Kelly McQuillen, Diabetes and Chronic Disease Unit, Manitoba Health at 948-3430.

- Nelson House has a country food program that co-ordinates and distributes wild foods through their country food store.

Partners:

- York Factory First Nations, Cross Lake First Nations, Nisichawayasihk First Nation (Nelson House, Lac Brochet) and other northern organizations who currently support a community foods program/activity.

- First Nations, Metis and Inuit groups from outside of Manitoba can also provide examples of successful community-based models.
- MKO, SERDC, NACC and MMF would co-operate in co-ordinating and delivering a series of conferences/events.
- The federal government will be invited to fund the conferences/events.
- Funding agency for start-up and ongoing operational costs of community foods programs.
- Manitoba Conservation provides guidance and direction for use of native game and fish to ensure sustainable levels of harvest.
- Frontier School Division, Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre and other schools will participate in the cultural education component of the program.
- INAC would be invited to act as facilitator for this program and assist in the co-ordination and organization.

Benefits:

- Increase access to local wild game as a low cost food source for northern citizens.
- Using local success stories helps to encourage other communities and builds on currently successful models.
- Holistic approach provides for hunter support, management of food distribution and cultural education.
- Opportunities to increase knowledge and awareness of food safety, quality and nutrition issues as large quantities of wild game are harvested and processed at one time in a central place.

Costs:

- Adjustments to a federal government staff person's role to facilitate the program.
- Annual workshop/event costs at $30,000 per year by federal government program.
- Community foods/distribution centre start-up costs for community foods program applicants (funding agency).
- Community-based hunter support program dollars to cover the cost of the hunt plus the transportation to the community of the wild game. Actual costs require a more detailed analysis and will be dependent on each participating community's need (local council).

Evaluation by Criteria and Guidelines: Northern Community Foods Program

Immediate/ Intermediate/ Long-term	**Specific Issue(s) Targeted/ Type of Benefit**	**Comm. Type that benefits**	**Comm. Need**	**Community-based components**
Immediate Intermediate	- nutritious indigenous foods - disposable income to purchase foods - food production/gathering local foods - availability of nutritious foods - transportation costs	RWA RA R	High	- community driven and supported - based on local potential and leadership - community volunteers/workers

Holistic approach components	**Meets Goal of: NDS, HCM, INAC, HC (FNIHB), MB Health, Nutrition/health, community**	**Ease of Implement./ Existing model or template**	**Estimated Cost of Implement. - start-up - maintain**	**Pilot Project – y/n - workable - sustainable Cautionary Notes**
- partnerships - networking - use of existing resources - opportunities for youth - community input	Community HC(FNIHB) INAC HCM Manitoba Health	Moderately complex Use existing models Public and political acceptability and support?	Annual conference/workshop costs are $30,000 Start-up funds Small annual operating budgets/ community	Pilot – two years of conferences and evaluate remaining three years of events Sustainable – based on local community support and relatively few dollars required after start-up costs Cautionary Notes: Demographics and availability of natural resources must be given serious consideration

Prioritized Strategic Option # 5 – Local Food Provision: Northern Greenhouse Pilot Project

Description:

This option will pilot test the viability of alternative greenhouse-type of production as a means to increase local production of fruits and vegetables in two to three remote communities. Additional resources will be needed and include: funding for research and gathering knowledge about new technologies and successes with greenhouse production systems in northern climates; a paid community greenhouse project manager for each pilot site; subsidized energy costs; technical and business management training and support; funding for capital and operational costs; complimentary nutrition education.

Goals:

- To establish pilot greenhouse technology projects in two to three remote northern communities.
- To determine best practises related to innovative greenhouse technology and production of fruits and vegetables in northern Manitoba.
- To educate and employ youth in the business of food production.
- To utilize nutrition education and awareness to encourage customer purchase of locally grown nutritious fruits and vegetables.

Outcomes:

- A variety of locally produced vegetables and fruits are available and purchased/used at reasonable cost to local citizens.

Project Components:

- Community asset mapping will be used to identify community potential, challenges and development needs for participation in the greenhouse pilot project. The Aboriginal Agricultural Initiative Co-ordinator with MAFRI can work with northern communities and help identify appropriate communities of participation.
- Based on the community asset mapping results, two or three northern communities, preferably remote, without all-weather road access, will choose to participate in a greenhouse pilot project to establish the viability of greenhouses (or alternate structures) as a sustainable way to provide local fruits and vegetables for the community.
- Alternative structures may include a variety of innovative greenhouse-like growing conditions – new hot house technologies and systems, use of a local arena (Inuvik), lower cost seasonal structures, abandoned mines, etc. Successful northern models will be investigated and best practices for greenhouse-type production within Manitoba will be developed.
- The greenhouse structure could be a community-owned and operated venture, perhaps in a co-operative business structure. Or, the greenhouse could be an owner operated business. The business format will depend on community need and input.
- A community project manager will be hired to manage the pilot project, will receive orientation and training, and work directly with the MAFRI specialist and project team to implement the pilot project.
- Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives (MAFRI) Greenhouse specialist will provide technical information, research and advice and will bring together a project team of community participants, specialists from within MAFRI, other departments and Manitoba Hydro to provide information about new technologies and production methods, cost of production, marketing, food safety and handling, nutrition and other information.
- Community composting project to be established to provide necessary compost ingredients for the greenhouse soils.
- In addition to the primary purpose of providing nutritious fruits and vegetables for the community, opportunities to also grow value-added products such as herbs or medicinals for high premium niche markets in the south can be investigated. (Note: commercial sale of traditional medicines requires sensitivity and

guidance by the community Elders). The sales of such products might offset the high cost of operating the greenhouse. A marketing advantage is to market the product as an Aboriginal, natural, and/or grown in a pristine environment product. This also provides a back-haul opportunity out of the community, which helps to offset the transportation costs of bringing other foods into the community. Co-ordination with trucking and local food retailers will provide mutual benefit for lower freight charges.

- Northern and remote greenhouse pilot operations will require energy cost subsidization. Manitoba Hydro will partner by assisting with these costs.
- As a project team member, Small Business (IEDM) and Co-operative Development (IAF) will provide business planning and/or co-op development advice and guidance.
- A funding source will be identified to assist in the research, capital and operational costs of this pilot. Possibly innovation Covering New Ground, a community economic development fund, a sustainable development fund, or a First Nations business development fund.
- The intent of the pilot is to establish a sustainable greenhouse operation that will be able to generate sufficient income to cover its expenses with minimal subsidization from government. If successful, the pilot project will provide a template for other similar greenhouse structures/businesses in other interested communities.
- It is assumed that operating greenhouse structures in the north will require specialized technology and production practises. Currently, there is a gap in knowledge related to greenhouse operation in northern Manitoba. MAFRI will dedicate sufficient time and resources to narrow this gap in knowledge and will co-ordinate the development of best practices guidelines for use of greenhouse and alternate structures in northern and remote Manitoba communities.
- Greenhouse production, business planning, management and employee training will be provided for all participants in the pilot project.
- A school initiated course (SIC) high school credit, and possibly a technical education school program, will be developed for Frontier School Division, Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre and other schools to approve and offer. These high school courses will educate and train youth on the production, business planning, business opportunities and management of greenhouse operations, as well as other northern food production and processing ventures, in the north. Youth will also be offered employment and apprenticeship opportunities to work in the greenhouse.
- Greenhouse production, processing and marketing can also be incorporated in community Junior Achievement and 4-H program activity.
- The participating community might choose to organize their greenhouse business as an in-school training program with the business providing a cash income to support the school program.
- Regional health authorities, food retailers, as well as MMF, MKO, tribal councils, local schools, and community health and education staff will compliment this initiative by providing community-based nutrition educational programs that build on choices related to locally grown, nutritious and quality products.
- This greenhouse project should be linked to the Northern Gardens Initiatives and Northern Freezer Purchase options, as there is a natural link to local gardens, storage and preservation activities that add value to a greenhouse-type project.
- Food preservation education, resources and equipment will be required to ensure success in cold storage, canning, freezing, smoking and drying of nutritious foods.
- Equipment repair and maintenance training will be needed to have skilled repair people available locally to deal with the machines and technology of the greenhouse structure.

Partners:

- Community investment and commitment in the pilot project is essential and will require community investment of time, leadership, financial contributions, support and promotion.
- Cross Lake First Nations, Fox Lake First Nations at Gillam (under development) and Wabowden (successful commercial enterprises) and Inuvik (converted arena) are achieving some success with local gardening and greenhouse initiatives and can provide models for success in other communities. Additional experience with greenhouse initiatives can also be found in Berens River which focused on individual ownership, non-profit and student employment.
- Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives will be asked to focus and provide greenhouse production and other technical expertise, liaison with northern and Aboriginal producers and processors, and the development of best practices.
- Northern Forest Diversification Centre assists micro-entrepreneurs in establishing business and market for medicinals and other wild plants.
- Circumpolar, participating countries will be contacted for information on technologies and systems that have proven successful in northern climates.
- IEDM and IAF provide small business and co-operative development expertise.
- Tribal Wi-Chi-Way-Win Capitol Corporation provides agricultural and business loans to Aboriginal farmers and business.
- Manitoba Energy, Science and Technology will assist in identifying appropriate funding source(s) to complete the research and pilot testing. The pilot project should not be held to the strictest terms of cost analysis and profitability of a greenhouse operation since the project is designed to aid in community food security as well as economic and community development.
- Manitoba Hydro will subsidize the energy costs to the pilot greenhouse projects.
- Manitoba Hydro home economists can provide food preparation and preservation education and resources.
- Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, Assiniboine Community College, the University of Manitoba and Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth will develop the high school credit course and/or technical education school programs, for review and approval for use by Frontier School Division, Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre, and other schools.
- Delivery of related business and leadership programming by the Junior Achievement and 4-H program.
- The North West Company and other food retailers could be invited to partner with the project by purchasing and selling the quality local produce at reasonable prices. Alternatively, the pilot may choose to participate, learn and develop direct sales experience and systems.
- Regional Health Authorities, Food Retailers, MMF, local Tribal Council, First Nations leadership, and community health and education staff will support and provide community-based nutrition educational programs.
- Funding agency such as Western Diversification, Covering New Ground, Aboriginal business programs, etc.

Benefits:

- Best practices are developed for appropriate greenhouse-type technology in the works.
- High quality and locally grown fruits and vegetables are made available to the community.
- Increased consumption of fruits and vegetables because they are locally grown, available and affordable.
- Economic and community development, community pride and self-reliance.

- Value-added business opportunities may generate profits that support the local food production costs.
- Increased sources of training, employment and income for youth and other citizens in the north.
- Back-haul opportunities out of northern communities, which help to reduce the cost of bringing foods into the community.
- Locally owned and run greenhouses will provide a focus for citizens, including youth, to make nutritious food choices and will help increase community food security.
- Over time, the greenhouse operation will become self-sufficient in meeting its costs of operation.
- Community composting project adds value to the community.

Challenges:

- Substantial new knowledge and skills are needed to successfully develop, operate and manage greenhouse food production and technologies in northern Manitoba.

Costs:

- Significant capital investment costs for researching, designing and building the appropriate greenhouse or alternative technologies for use in northern Manitoba. The cost analysis will need to be completed prior to funding application to an appropriate agency. A project proposal will be developed and submitted to appropriate funding agency.
- Two to three pilot project manager salaries, expenses and training costs at $ 120,000 per year.
- Ongoing greenhouse operational costs until premium value-added product is established and profitable.
- Focus by MAFRI greenhouse specialist to provide expertise and facilitate the project teams.

Evaluation by Criteria and Guidelines: Northern Greenhouse Pilot Project

Immediate/ Intermediate/ Long-term	Specific Issue(s) Targeted/ Type of Benefit	Comm. Type that benefits	Comm. Need	Community-based components
Immediate	- healthy food choices - availability of nutritious foods - transportation costs - distribution costs - food production - variability and differences in communities - disposable income	RWA	H	- community choice and investment to participate - local ownership and manager of pilot - local employee training and support

Holistic approach components	Meets Goal of: NDS, HCM, INAC, HC (FNIHB), MB Health, Nutrition/health, community	Ease of Implement./ Existing model or template	Estimated Cost of Implement. - start-up - maintain	Pilot Project – y/n - workable - sustainable Cautionary Notes
- partnerships - use existing resources - equity with southern greenhouse programs - nutrition education and awareness - economic development - local youth employment and education - community input as to produce grown and sold - community input as to other value-added product produced - tap into MB Hydro's re-investment into northern communities - extending the use of foods through preservation and storage	NDS HCM INAC HC (FNIHB) Community Nutrition/health Manitoba Health	Moderately complex: - new dollars needed - technology models exist in other jurisdictions - requires substantial skill training and support Politically acceptable Publicly acceptable: some concern about feasibility of traditional all season greenhouse businesses - must deal with vandalism	- high start-up - ongoing operational costs	Pilot project - yes - workable - sustainable only if there is community commitment and investment. Financial sustainability may not be clarified in two-year pilot Cautionary Notes: - the actual cost of producing fruits and vegetables may not be lower than importing from the south but the social and economic benefit to the community will compensate

Prioritized Strategic Option # 6 – Local Food Provision: Northern Gardens Initiatives

Description:

Increase the number of northern gardens (private, community, school, and business) through the promotion and provision of the necessary supports. There are successful northern gardens and the components of this success will be shared with other communities: access to local gardening tillage equipment, seed and fertilizer; knowledge and skills and technical support in gardening, storage, preservation and sales; management and control of vandalism and theft through development of community pride and involvement; youth training and employment.

Goals:

- To increase the practice of gardening in northern communities.
- To determine best practices related to production of fruits and vegetables in northern Manitoba.
- To educate and employ youth in the business of food production.
- To utilize nutrition education and awareness to encourage customer purchase and/or use of locally grown nutritious fruits and vegetables.

Outcomes:

- A variety of locally produced vegetables and fruits are available and purchased/used at reasonable cost to local citizens.
- New businesses provide long-lasting community and economic development and local food self-sufficiency.

Initiative Components:

- The process of community asset mapping will be used to identify community potential, challenges and development needs for participation in garden initiatives.
- Based on community interest, and where adequate soils are available, individual and community gardens will be established in the community. In addition, produce storage and preservation activities and training will be identified and offered. Volunteer participants from the community are essential to be sure the gardens are well cared for and utilized.
- Promotion of the use and benefits of gardening through inter-community sharing will be an important component.
- Community gardens either must be within walking distance for families or flexible transportation to gardens will be needed.
- Access to water supply must be included in the plan.
- Assistance will be given to individuals, through the use of community-owned (co-operative business structure) tillage machinery, seed and fertilizer supplies, soil testing and analysis.
- Management and co-ordination of the program will require paid local technical support as well as access to specialist/resource expertise and provincial program co-ordination. This initiative has a natural link with the Northern Greenhouse Pilot Project option by providing the seedlings for the gardens from the local greenhouse.
- Employment programs can be used to hire and train the local technical person.
- The network of local technical employees will have opportunities to share progress, successes, research and ideas with each other on a regular basis.
- Research and testing will be done to establish the best practises and appropriate vegetables and fruits to be grown in northern communities. From this, a model will be developed than can be offered to other communities to work with and adapt to their circumstances.
- Gardening information and training will be provided to local technical staff and all family members of those who choose to have a garden.

- Community composting project to be established to provide necessary compost ingredients for the garden soils.
- Food preservation education and support will be provided, with assistance from Manitoba Hydro home economists. This will include education and programs for canning, smoking, drying and freezing locally grown/produced foods. Financial support to purchase preservation equipment such as canners, jars, freezers and other equipment may be needed; link to the Northern Freezer Purchase Program option.
- School-based community gardens will be established in partnership with Frontier School Division and other schools as requested. These community gardens will provide hands-on training to high school youth in the areas of food self-sufficiency and gardening skills. A School Initiated Course (SIC) high school credit related to gardening and the business of direct sales will be developed for Frontier School Division (and other schools who wish to offer it) to approve and offer. The local technical employee will work with the school and support the garden initiatives throughout the summer months when school is not in session.
- Northern gardening can be included as a component of a Technical Education School Program (to be developed for and used by Frontier School Division and other schools) where school students learn and apprentice in the northern food business sector.
- Northern gardening production, processing, marketing systems can also be incorporated into community Junior Achievement and 4-H program activity.
- Produce from the community gardens can be used in school nutrition initiatives. Or, the community garden can have an entrepreneurial or youth employment component where students learn and participate in the business of selling produce to local citizens or the retail food store.
- Regional Health Authorities, Food Retailers, MMF, local Tribal Council, First Nations leadership, and community health and education staff will support and provide community-based nutrition educational programs associated with these locally grown fruits and vegetables.
- Equipment repair and maintenance training will be needed to have skilled repair people available locally to deal with the machines and technology of the greenhouse structure.
- The Northern Food Store and other food retailers will partner with the project by purchasing and selling the local produce at reasonable prices.
- Alternatively, direct sales/community market systems can be learned, promoted and implemented.

Partners:

- Community leaders will foster and promote community involvement.
- Program funding for each community gardening initiative will be needed. Employment and training programs will be used to fund the local technical employee component.
- Consultation with Cross Lake, Oxford House First Nations, Wabowden, Berens River and other communities to evaluate the gardening models used successfully.
- NACC and First Nations Leadership support will be needed to approve use of available land, to help establish guidelines, and to support the involvement of recreation directors.
- Where friendship centre programming exists, they can play an integral role in helping to coordinate gardening initiatives, provide education and value-added programs.
- Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives and the University of Manitoba will provide the vegetable production and gardening expertise to the program.
- Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, Assiniboine Community College, the University of Manitoba and Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth will develop the high school credit course and/or

Technical Education School Program for review and approval for use by Frontier School Division and other schools.

- INAC and ANA to work together to identify appropriate funds for research, training and start-up costs in each community.
- Frontier School Division, Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre, Junior Achievement and 4-H Program to advise and test school-based education and apprenticeship programs that are developed for high school students and are related to northern food business sector careers.
- Regional Health Authorities, food retailers, MMF, local tribal council, First Nations leadership, and community health and education staff will support and provide community-based nutrition educational programs.
- University of Manitoba gardening expertise (Merv Pritchard).
- Mennonite Central Committee will be invited to participate and contribute their garden experience with northern and Aboriginal communities.

Benefits:

- Families who choose to have a garden have ready access to fresh fruits and vegetables at low cost. This may increase their choice to consume these nutritious foods.
- Economic and community development through the use of community gardens, employment and sales.
- Lower priced fruits and vegetables from community gardens available on a seasonable basis in local retail food store(s).
- Youth-based education and involvement in gardening ventures. This may also reduce the risk of vandalism to community gardening projects.

Challenges:

- There is a history of negative gardening experiences in some northern and Aboriginal communities.
- Northern gardens expertise and support is needed and is currently lacking.

Costs:

- The new Aboriginal Agricultural Initiatives Co-ordinator with MAFRI will spend some of his/her time working with northern producers (30-50 per cent) to facilitate this initiative.
- Relatively small program funds required on an annual basis to support the individual gardens, equipment and inputs.
- Salaries or adjustments to existing job functions in the community and to provincial specialists to provide the technical support and training.

Evaluation by Criteria and Guidelines: Northern Gardens Initiatives

Immediate/ Intermediate/ Long-term	Specific Issue(s) Targeted/ Type of Benefit	Comm. Type that benefits	Comm. Need	Community-based components
Immediate Intermediate	- high food prices - nutrition/healthy food choices - availability of nutritious foods - transportation costs - distribution costs - food production - food retailing - differences in communities	All	High: much needed nutrient content	- community choice as to form of gardening to take place - community gardening and youth education - local person managing and assisting the projects - local equipment available, repaired and maintained

Holistic approach components	Meets Goal of: NDS, HCM, INAC, HC (FNIHB), MB Health, Nutrition/health, community	Ease of Implement./ Existing model or template	Estimated Cost of Implement. - start-up - maintain	Pilot Project – y/n - workable - sustainable Cautionary Notes
- partnerships - networking - use existing resources - all citizens - education and awareness re: nutrition/healthy choices - opportunities for youth - community input	HCM HC (FNIHB) Nutrition/health Community NDS INAC Manitoba Health	Moderately complex Model or template exists	- start-up costs are low - maintain costs are low	Pilot project - no - workable in communities that have soil to work with Otherwise too costly to bring in soils - sustainable if local technical support and/or community champions exist
			Politically acceptable Public acceptability will depend on value placed on gardening in the community	Cautionary Notes: There is a history of negative gardening experiences Gardening is not considered cool by today's youth

Prioritized Strategic Option # 7 – Systems Factors: Northern Food Price Survey Program

Description:

Food price surveys will be completed in northern and remote communities on a regular basis, using a pricing protocol appropriate for the north and consistent across communities. Data will be used by a variety of partners including MKO, MMF, Manitoba Bureau of Statistics, Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, INAC, Food Mail, HC (FNIHB), Northern Manitoba's Community-based Profiles project, and Manitoba Hydro. The data will be used to identify food price issues requiring further investigation such as: comparison of nutritious food prices with other northern communities; establishment of northern cost of living and/or social assistance allowances; development of family budgeting resources; monitoring the effect of programs such as transportation subsidy, milk price review, etc.

Currently, various departments and agencies are doing food pricing in northern Manitoba communities:

- Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. (MKO) is currently working with Food Mail to provide food pricing data for the Food Mail program, has access to community staff resources and is interested in having community-based food prices information.
- Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) and the Food Mail Program has funding that supports the Food Mail pricing, has historical and national food pricing data, protocols, analysis and training resources.
- Manitoba Bureau of Statistics (MBS) has completed a price monitoring survey in northern communities for over 30 years and has financial, data base, protocols, analysis and reporting resources.
- Statistics Canada surveys food pricing on a regular basis across the country.
- The Northern Community-based Profiles Project, currently being designed and tested by a partnership group of northern stakeholders is developing community-based and community-driven profiles that will assist in the process of community asset mapping. The profiles project will provide information for community-based economic and community development decisions. This project requires food pricing as a component of their cost of living profile.
- Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs is interested in having data related to the cost of living in northern First Nation communities.
- Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives (MAFRI) has produced a comprehensive cost of living data base and family budgeting resource for southern Manitoba entitled *Budget Guides since 1977*. MAFRI has staff, database, protocols, analysis and reporting resources.
- Manitoba Hydro has used the MBS food price data for several years to estimate northern cost of living allowances.
- Food Security Network agencies are interested in cost of living data and have attempted some northern food pricing.

Goals:

- To complete a food price survey twice a year in all northern communities. The timing of the pricing will reflect the effect of winter road access to remote communities.
- Nutrition and health professionals will utilize food price survey data as a tool in educating northern clients about food choices and family budgeting.

Outcomes:

- Credible, accessible data on food prices that can be used in the monitoring and analysis of food-related issues in northern Manitoba.
- Accurate milk pricing data for use by Manitoba Milk Price Review Commission to support its milk product pricing in northern Manitoba.

- Price monitoring of nutritious foods available for all new initiatives undertaken to reduce the retail price of foods in northern and remote communities.

Program Content:

- A multi-party Manitoba Food Price Survey consortium will be drawn together to provide a common data base of northern (and southern) food prices that is shared, customized to meet the needs of Consortium participants and is made available and promoted for public use. Consortium participants will be:
  - Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.
  - Manitoba Metis Federation
  - Northern Association of Community Councils
  - Association of Manitoba Municipalities – Northern communities
  - Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs
  - The Northern Community Profile Project (MKO)
  - Northern and Aboriginal Population Health and Wellness Institute
  - Manitoba First Nations Centre for Aboriginal Health Research – U of M and AMC
  - Manitoba Bureau of Statistics
  - Statistics Canada
  - Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
  - Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives
  - Manitoba Family Services and Housing
  - Indian and Northern Affairs Canada – Food Mail Program
  - Manitoba Hydro, INCO, HBMS (an industry representative)
  - North West Company and other northern food retailers
  - representative from the nutrition/health sector
- Manitoba Food Price Survey Consortium will function as a steering committee with member participants having both an advisory and service function:
  - Initially, Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (ANA) will provide the steering committee co-ordinator and facilitator role. It is suggested that the new Northern and Aboriginal Population Health and Wellness Institute may be the appropriate agency to co-ordinate and facilitate this program once it is operational and its mandate is clarified. This suggestion is made as the new agency is in the process of forming and may include a similar consortium of stakeholders and purpose as identified in this description.
  - MBS will be responsible for gathering the food price data; providing annual training to community-based pricers; providing basic data analysis; developing and providing customized data bases/reports to each consortium participant; providing public access to the data.
  - MKO, SERDC, MMF, NACC and the Northern Community-based profiles project will promote the food price survey at the community level; will help to identify community-based people to complete the pricing each year (or twice a year to reflect winter road access in remote communities) and may offer community and/or youth training funds for community food pricers.
  - INAC – Food Mail Program will use the data to contribute to its Food Mail Program data base and analysis; will contribute funding to train community volunteers to do the pricing; will provide a link to national food price data bases.
  - MAFRI will contribute the experience and protocols of budget guides and will co-operate by integrating this food pricing data into the development of the annual budget guides manual and fact sheet materials.
  - North West Company and other food retailers will support the food pricing in each of their stores; will permit the data to be used publicly.
  - Manitoba Hydro and other northern industry stakeholders will be invited to contribute funding to the annual pricing process; will use the data for company decision-making.

  - Nutrition and Health Sector will identify and use the data as a nutrition/health analysis and education tool for northern citizens; will promote the use of the data/reports with community-based nutrition and health educators.

- Manitoba Food Price Survey Consortium will be responsible for:
  - Developing clear guidelines and parameters by which they will accomplish their task.
  - Clearly establishing issues of ownership, confidentiality, access and use of the data. Access to the data is extremely important issue and must be useable at the community level as well as by participating government agencies.
  - Clearly establishing the food price survey information needs of each Consortium participant.
  - Developing and approving a new common food pricing survey tool, protocols, data, software, reports as needed by each participant.
  - Monitoring and evaluating the food price survey program for success and identifying additions and improvements to the use of the common food price database.
  - Each consortium participant will be responsible for their own analysis and description of the food price data.
- FNIHB (Health Canada), Manitoba Health; Regional Housing Authorities; Healthy Child Manitoba and Manitoba Family Services and Housing and community health educators will tap into the pricing data and use it to enhance programs and services related to nutrition, healthy food choices, family budgeting and lower cost shopping skills, income support and cost of living.

Benefits:

- Increased access to regular dependable data about the price of nutritious foods for the many communities and agencies that can benefit from the information. The new database can be designed to reflect: actual food prices, consumption/expenditure patterns in relation to nutritional needs, comparisons for social assistance and/or cost of living allowances, milk price review monitoring, comparisons amongst communities, price changes over time, etc.
- One common database of northern and southern food prices and one set of statistically valid numbers will be developed and available for Manitoba.
- This option provides for the efficient use of existing resources and expertise for a more community-based and broader-use data base of food prices.
- Manitoba Bureau of Statistics involvement in the data collection and analysis provides credibility and integrity to the data base and program.
- Once the common food price data base is established to provide the basic information needs of consortium participants, more detailed and customized analysis of the data can be integrated into the program over time.
- Broad food price surveying will provide an appropriate system of monitoring milk prices as outlined in the Milk Price Review in Northern Communities option.
- Regular pricing and monitoring will encourage food retailers to provide, as much as is possible, quality nutritious foods at a reasonable price. Note: Food retailers value a heightened recognition for their involvement and contributions to initiatives that benefit the community, the school and the youth.
- Focus and emphasis on nutritious foods will bring awareness to citizens of the importance of nutritious food choices.
- Science-based information about food prices in northern Manitoba can provide a base for subsequent actions.
- This option helps to provide data and evaluative information as well as a partnership structure that supports other strategic options related to northern food prices.

Challenges:

- Negotiating and determining issues related to access to the data collected.
- Existing food pricing programs and protocols will require adaptation and change to accommodate the variety of analytical needs.

Costs:

- New money required by MBS to provide this program as a core program and not as a cost recovery program to consortium participants is estimated at $100,000 for the first year. Software, survey tool and reporting format development; annual program costs following start-up to be identified by MBS.
- Co-ordination of community volunteers to be added to existing agency workloads.
- Training and honorarium costs for community pricing will be required on an annual basis. INAC will provide human resources to train volunteers; MAFRI at in-kind for southern communities; honorariums for volunteer community pricers may be provided through the Northern Community-based Profiles project as well as other funding sources.

Evaluation by Criteria and Guidelines: Northern Food Price Survey Program

Immediate/ Intermediate/ Long-term	Specific Issue(s) Targeted/ Type of Benefit	Comm. Type that benefits	Comm. Need	Community-based components
Immediate	- monitoring food prices in all northern communities - variability and differences in communities - disposable income	All	M	- community partners - community surveyors/pricers - support to MKO goal for community ownership/use of pricing data and detailed community profiles

Holistic approach components	Meets Goal of: NDS, HCM, INAC, HC (FNIHB), MB Health, Nutrition/health, community	Ease of Implement./ Existing model or template	Estimated Cost of Implement. - start-up - maintain	Pilot Project – y/n - workable - sustainable Cautionary Notes
- partnerships - use existing resources - all northern citizens - education and awareness - community input	HCM INAC HC (FNIHB) Manitoba Health Community	Not complex Existing models and templates available Good extension of existing government initiatives	Start-up: Co-ordination and redesign existing tools, protocols and databases to suit the needs of each partner = $100,000 Maintain: To be established	Pilot project - no Workable if partners agree to being flexible Sustainable because by building on existing programs, co-ordination will minimize costs to each partner
		Politically acceptable Publicly acceptable and requested	By MBS Adjustment to job descriptions needed	Cautionary Notes: Legal and standard professional practices must be respected

Detailed Strategic Option Descriptions

Additional Strategic Options

Additional Strategic Option – Local Food Provision: Northern Country/Wild Foods Development Program

Description:

This option focuses on the encouragement, support and development of country food enterprises for sale and use of foods locally. This is done by pulling together project teams and resources that work with communities and entrepreneurs to identify, research, develop, produce, process, market and sell country foods locally and as an export from the community. Additional staff and resources would be needed by Northern Forest Diversification Centre to be able to provide this increased emphasis and support to food-based businesses. Partnering agencies will adjust and focus resources to provide substantial support to the project teams.

Goals:

- To increase the number of micro-business wild food enterprises in northern communities.
- To have country/wild foods made more available as a nutritious food source at reasonable cost to local consumers.
- To educate and employ youth in the business of country/wild food production and processing.
- To educate northern citizens in the nutritional value of country/wild foods in their diets.

Outcomes:

- Where sustainable harvest of country/wild foods permit, northern citizens will purchase/use lower cost nutritious foods in a healthy diet.
- New businesses provide long-lasting community and economic development and local food self-sufficiency.

Components:

- Community asset mapping will be used to identify community potential, challenges and development needs for participation in country foods initiatives.
- Use of local, nutritious foods will be promoted to community members to encourage nutritious choices. This could be done in combination with cultural camps, in school programs and teachings by the Elders from the community. Including youth in the benefits and opportunities is an important part of the sustainability of these types of initiatives.
- Examples of country/wild foods to be investigated and harvested in a sustainable manner includes: mushrooms, berries, wild rice, fiddleheads, wild flower honey, Manitoba maple and birch syrup, medicinals (within the guidance of the Elders), wild game, rabbits, fish, etc.
- Northern Forest Diversification Centre (NFDC) hires one to two professional staff to co-ordinate, manage and promote and help identify community initiatives related to country foods opportunities. NFDC will support each project team and provide marketing and sales support for producers.
- Project teams of government experts/specialists dedicated to work with local entrepreneurs and/or community groups to identify, research, develop, produce, process, market and sell local country foods.
- Economic development staff with tribal councils, First Nations communities, MMF, Communities Economic Development Fund, Local Government Development (ANA) and

municipal corporations become the project team lead for the entrepreneur or community co-op. Project team lead provides the co-ordination, pathfinding and facilitation of input by the various experts dedicated to the project team.

- Incorporating the use of country foods into nutrition awareness and education initiatives will give another opportunity for health and nutrition educators to get their message across re: healthy living and nutritious choices.
- NFDC will also facilitate the sharing of food business successes with other communities by supporting entrepreneurs learning how to teach entrepreneurs and by providing hands-on workshops.
- A school initiated course could be developed for testing and use with Frontier Division, Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre and other schools. Other youth programs such as 4-H and Junior Achievement can contribute to the education and training of youth.
- There is also a potential for many of these foods to be sold to southern markets, once the local demand is met. Partnerships are developed with transport companies to co-operate and co-ordinate back-haul opportunities out of the community that will reduce the transportation costs for food coming into the community.
- Communities are surveyed to identify which country foods they may wish to have available locally and which are not currently accessible to them.
- Government funding for country/wild foods businesses will require a designated percentage of the food product to be sold locally at a reasonable price, based on community demand. Additional food products can be sold into higher premium niche markets in southern communities.
- One method of sharing community/wild food business success, for promoting the consumption of local foods and for teaching others is through the development of recipes. Initiatives such as the production and sale of a country/wild food recipe book, recipe sheets and/or recipe contest are some examples.

Partners:

- Northern Forest Diversification Centre will provide the overall co-ordination and facilitation of this program. This will be done by facilitating partnerships; by facilitating the development of and supporting the project teams for each micro-business venture; by providing co-operative marketing and sales services as needed; and by facilitating the sharing of business success across the province.
- Northern Forest Diversification Centre provides the one-on-one support to individuals and communities to develop the businesses and market the products.
- Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, Food Development Centre, Manitoba Industry, Economic Development and Mines and Manitoba Conservation provide commitment for staff involvement on project teams. Their role is to provide the expert information and support related to food production, harvesting, processing, food safety and quality, nutritional benefits, food preparation, packaging, business planning, marketing, and sales.
- Economic development staff with tribal councils, First Nations communities, MMF, Communities Economic Development Fund, Local Government Development (ANA) and municipal corporations develop skills and adjust job descriptions, as needed, to act as project team leads.
- The Northern Stores and other local food retailers will partner with the country food business, where appropriate, to make the food available locally at a reasonable price to local citizens.
- Individuals and/or community groups identify the potential opportunities and invest time, energy and dollars into the initiative.
- Existing funding agencies – municipal, provincial and federal – yet to be determined.

- Trucking companies will co-operate and co-ordinate their back-haul opportunities with incoming truckloads.

Benefits:

- Increased promotion, access and use of nutritious country foods at a reasonable price plus increased food security.
- Economic and community development where there is a sustainable supply of country foods available.
- Facilitation of partnerships and program delivery will help to reduce bureaucratic barriers currently existing with micro-enterprise funding and program services.
- Increased sources of employment and income for citizens in the north.
- Back-haul opportunities out of northern communities, to help reduce the cost of bringing foods into the community.

Challenges:

- Maintaining sustainable levels of harvest of country/wild foods.

Costs:

- New staff and operational costs for Northern Forest Diversification Centre are $80,000.
- Adjustments to existing human and financial resources within various participating agencies.

Evaluation by Criteria and Guidelines: Northern Country/Wild Foods Development Program

Immediate/ Intermediate/ Long-term	Specific Issue(s) Targeted/ Type of Benefit	Comm. Type that benefits	Comm. Need	Community-based components
Immediate Intermediate	- high food prices - availability of nutritious foods - awareness of healthy food and lifestyle choices - transportation costs - distribution costs - competition - food production - food processing - food retailing - variability and differences in communities - country foods - disposable income	All: depends on available supply	High	- community asset mapping - focus on community-driven and local food sector ventures - using a local food supply

Holistic approach components	Meets Goal of: NDS, HCM, INAC, HC (FNIHB), MB Health, Nutrition/health, community	Ease of Implement./ Existing model or template	Estimated Cost of Implement. - start-up - maintain	Pilot Project – y/n - workable - sustainable Cautionary Notes
- partnerships - use existing resources - all citizens: depends on available supply - youth education and participation - community input - economic development	NDS HCM INAC HC (FNIHB) Nutrition/health Community	Moderately complex - requires additional dollars, co-ordination and job description adjustments - programs and technical skills exist but require new paradigms	New staff position required on a long-term basis Adjustment to existing resources	Sustainability depends on: - good community asset mapping for potentials and challenges - long-term staff resources and support Cautionary Note: - potential conflict between selling products for high profits to the south verses providing local foods at fair price

Additional Strategic Option – Systems Factors: Northern Freight Rate Reduction Options

Description:

There are several options that government may choose to implement that will reduce the freight/transportation costs of nutritious foods to the north:

1. Government may choose to change regulations to allow trucking companies to use longer truck trailers (rocky mountain doubles) on the more narrow northern roads. It is argued that the change in regulation will help to decrease trucking costs to northern communities. This option proposes that all such cost savings to the company will be directed to reducing the freight cost of nutritious foods transported to the north.
2. Manitoba may choose to lobby Canada to eliminate the GST charged on the freight costs of nutritious foods to northern Manitoba.
3. The Province of Manitoba may choose to design and implement a fuel tax exemption for trucking freight and airfreight companies delivering nutritious foods to northern communities. The province may wish to target the exemption to shipments into the isolated communities without all-weather road access. This exemption could be modelled after the one offered to mining exploration companies for off-road exploration and ore recovery.
4. The Province of Manitoba may choose to enhance the frequency of ferry service into remote communities. During the times of year where ferry service is provided, more frequent ferry service allows for retailers to ship in nutritious perishables on a more regular basis. This supports food retailers in providing greater quantity and better quality nutritious foods to those communities.
5. See Northern 18-month Food Mail Pilot Project (also a freight reduction option).

Goals:

- Government will use regulation, taxation and policies to reduce the cost of freight of nutritious foods to northern communities.

Outcomes:

- Lower retail food prices for the consumer.

Components:

- Freight costs to northern communities includes that charged by truck, ferry and air transportation systems. Freight charges contribute significantly to the high price of retail foods in northern Manitoba, especially for air freight of perishable foods into communities without all-weather road access.
- The Province of Manitoba would investigate and evaluate pros and cons of the first four options for northern, especially remote northern, community prices of nutritious foods. Specific emphasis will be on the policy of reducing the freight costs for nutritious foods being sold to northern citizens. The necessary changes to regulations and laws can then be implemented.

Partners:

- Manitoba Transportation and Government Services (TGS) will have the major responsibility for implementation of any or all of the four proposed options to reduce freight costs. TGS will also be responsible for negotiating and monitoring the freight charges to northern communities to ensure the cost savings result in preferred freight rates for nutritious foods to the north.
- The list of nutritious foods that qualify for the reduced freight rate will be established by a committee of northern stakeholders and health professionals and could be the same list as developed under the Northern Nutritious Food Rebate Program option.
- Manitoba Milk Price Review Commission would be asked to contribute to the development of the formula for the preferred nutri-

tious food freight rate. This would be made possible if the Milk Price Review in Northern Communities option was implemented.

- Trucking, ferry, rail and airline companies that haul food products to the north, as partners in these options, will co-operate in identifying reasonable ways to implement, evaluate and monitor cost savings to be applied to freight charges for selected nutritious foods.
- North West Company stores and other food retailers will be asked to partner in ensuring nutritious foods sold in the community reflect the transportation cost saving with lower food prices.
- Retail food prices and the effect of these freight cost reductions on nutritious foods will be monitored by the food price surveying as outlined in the Northern Food Price Survey Program option.

Benefits:

- Significant reductions to the retail price of foods can be accomplished by reducing the freight costs for shipping them into northern and remote communities.
- Emphasizing reduced freight charges for a list of nutritious foods will ensure all cost savings are applied to nutritious food and not distributed broadly throughout the company business.

Challenges:

- Complex and untested process to calculate how and how much the cost savings to truck and air freight companies will be applied to freight costs for nutritious foods being transported into northern communities.
- Additional and complex administrative procedures will be required to set up, monitor and audit new exemptions and/or rebates.
- Challenge to ensure reduced freight costs is passed on to consumers through lower prices for nutritious foods.

Costs:

- Costs related to analysis and design of any or all of the freight reduction options.
- Administrative costs to design and monitor the transfer of freight cost savings to the transportation of nutritious foods will be incurred by both TGS and the various freight handling companies.
- Lost tax revenue by both the federal and provincial governments – yet to be determined.

Evaluation by Criteria and Guidelines: Northern Freight Rate Reduction Options

Immediate/ Intermediate/ Long-term	Specific Issue(s) Targeted/ Type of Benefit	Comm. Type that benefits	Comm. Need	Community-based components
Immediate	- transportation costs - high food prices of nutritious foods	All		- local food retailers apply the freight cost savings to nutritious foods at point of sale

Holistic approach components	Meets Goal of: NDS, HCM, INAC, HC (FNIHB), MB Health, Nutrition/health, community	Ease of Implement./ Existing model or template	Estimated Cost of Implement. - start-up - maintain	Pilot Project – y/n - workable - sustainable Cautionary Notes
- partnerships - regulation changes - equity with the south	NDS HCM HC (FNIHB) Nutrition/health	Moderately complex - regulation changes have been discussed and considered - new freight cost pricing system to be calculated and applied to nutritious foods	Unknown	Workable and sustainable with co-operation from all parties Cautionary Note: Issues of sustainability related to increased weight loads on existing road structure

Additional Strategic Option – Local Food Provision: Northern Youth Leadership Training Initiative

Description:

A new northern youth leadership skills course will be developed for use with middle grades school students. Based on community interest and need, the leadership course, the 4-H program (a youth leadership program), and Junior Achievement (a youth business training program) will be promoted, supported and delivered in northern communities in partnership with Frontier School Division and other schools. This option promotes long-term strategies for community development, community leadership and business skill development.

Goals:

- To provide leadership and food business training to northern youth.
- To deliver the 4-H and Junior Achievement programs in all northern communities.

Outcomes:

- Northern youth are skilled in leading community projects and food businesses.
- All northern and remote communities have increased self-sufficiency in local food provision over a period of five to 20 years resulting in lower costs for nutritious foods in each community.

Program Content:

- A process of community asset mapping will occur to determine local interest and capacity to initiate youth leadership and food business programs in the school and community. It is recognized that in smaller communities, youth programs must attract all youth in the community to be successful.
- A new youth leadership course will be developed for use in middle school grades. The course will focus on the information and skills specific to leadership in northern communities and organizations. This was an identified gap and need by Frontier School Division.
- A new technical education school program will be developed for high school youth to prepare students for a career in northern food production, processing and marketing.
- The 4-H program will assist in developing the youth leadership course utilizing existing 4-H program and MAFRI departmental resources. The new leadership resource will be developed using an advisory committee comprised of interested stakeholders such as Elders, MMF, MKO, Frontier School Division, Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre, and Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth.
- The 4-H program, MAFRI, will partner in piloting and delivering the course, through a 4-H project format in Frontier School Division schools. This youth leadership program will complement Frontier School Division's existing leadership course for high school students.
- Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre will be asked to assist First Nation schools in northern communities access the leadership course and the 4-H program as requested. The 4-H program will evaluate and identify flexible options of delivery for northern and remote communities.
- Recreational directors and school teachers will be encouraged and supported to use the course, the 4-H program, and Junior Achievement as youth leadership and business development tools in their communities. Work with programs such as Community Mobilization and Crime Prevention (contact Lisa Tremblay) and youth employment programs within the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement (MMF & AMC).
- A northern 4-H staff person will be hired to develop and deliver northern focussed youth local food production and leadership programs and resources. This can be done in partnership with Frontier School Division, Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre and community Recreation Directors. New 4-H project material will also be devel-

oped with an aboriginal interest in mind. 4-H projects will help to teach aboriginal cultural crafts such as working with birch bark, beading, tanning and using wild meats and plants.

- Build on current community initiatives such as the partnership of commercial greenhouse operations, Frontier School Division and Wabowden Community Council.
- The 4-H program will be utilized in the youth education related to the Northern Greenhouse pilot project and the Northern Gardens Initiative options and Northern Livestock Development pilot projects.
- Additional new 4-H resources will also be developed to assist in the training of adult volunteers. These resources will have an Aboriginal interest and will encourage the teachings by Elders in the community. 4-H program has proven flexibility in adapting its program to work with 4-C (4-H) youth in Durango, Mexico and school students from Japan.
- Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism will be approached for funding and support for annual northern regional youth and adult training events.
- Frontier School Division and/or ANA will be asked to partner by providing office space and administrative support to the 4-H staff person.

Partners:

- Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, 4-H program staff will develop the youth leadership course in partnership with Frontier School Division and Aboriginal Education Resource Centre to ensure it meets the leadership development needs of northern communities.
- Frontier School Division, Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre, other schools and Recreational Directors will promote the use of the leadership skills development course and the 4-H program in their communities.
- Community leadership and social agencies will encourage and support the development of youth leadership and food business skills training programs.
- Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs' Recreation/Wellness Consultants will further promote and facilitate the development of both the 4-H and Junior Achievement programs.
- Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism will be asked to investigate funding opportunities for northern adult and youth training events.

Benefits:

- Use of existing resources and programs such as the 4-H program, Frontier School Division, Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre, and community recreational directors.
- Satisfies a specific need identified by Frontier School Division.
- Training of northern and Aboriginal youth in community leadership and food business skills needed for their future and the future-economic and development in northern communities and organizations.
- Further promotion and development of the 4-H program in northern Manitoba will result in bringing additional benefits of the 4-H program to northern youth such as nutrition and food preparation, small business development, gardening, greenhouse operation, livestock production, crafting as a business, public speaking and meeting management.
- The 4-H program also provides training and development of volunteer adults to lead 4-H clubs and activities. Consequently adult volunteers benefit from leadership and technical skills training.
- Junior Achievement programs, delivered by school teachers in the school, will increase business knowledge and skills in northern youth.
- Support to prioritized strategic options such as Northern Greenhouse pilot project, Northern Gardens Initiative, Northern Food Business Development and Northern Community Foods programs.

Challenges:

- Jurisdictional barriers in reaching northern school youth.
- In some communities, there is limited experience by adults in leading volunteer youth programs and a perception that their skills are not adequate.

Costs:

- Additional resource development and staff costs required in the 4-H program. At least one new staff position and operating expenses of about $100,000.
- A second person could be hired under a northern employment and training program to build northern skills, expertise and employment.
- Office space and administrative support costs provided by ANA or Frontier School Division.
- Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism will be asked to provide development funds to assist northern youth and adult leadership training events, $20,000 annually.

Evaluation by Criteria and Guidelines: Northern Youth Leadership Training Initiative

Immediate/ Intermediate/ Long-term	Specific Issue(s) Targeted/ Type of Benefit	Comm. Type that benefits	Comm. Need	Community-based components
Long-term	- lack of awareness of healthy food/lifestyle - new knowledge and skills learned re: food production, processing, entrepreneurship, community leadership - differences in communities	All		- input from northern groups on school leadership course design and 4-H program re-design for northern people - delivery of leadership course in local schools - community participation in 4-H program

Holistic approach components	Meets Goal of: NDS, HCM, INAC, HC (FNIHB), MB Health, Nutrition/health, community	Ease of Implement./ Existing model or template	Estimated Cost of Implement. - start-up - maintain	Pilot Project – y/n - workable - sustainable Cautionary Notes
- partnerships - use of existing resources - all citizens - equity with the south - education and awareness re: nutrition and health - opportunities for youth - community input	NDS Nutrition/health Community	Moderately complex Publicly and politically acceptable	New staff position, program and operational budgets required	Workable and sustainable based on ongoing government funding

Additional Strategic Option – Local Food Provision: Northern Freezer Purchase Program

Description:

The freezer purchase program will assist families to purchase bulk (larger quantities) of nutritious foods at a lower/sale price. A freezer purchase fund will be established by provincial and federal government partnership funding. Northern organizations, MKO, MMF and NACC will work co-operatively to purchase the freezers and make them available to any northern citizen, community organization or food business that wishes to purchase one. The program will negotiate a bulk purchase price as close to wholesale cost as possible (First Nations Buying Group may be able to partner in this process). Northern citizens, organizations, businesses can apply to purchase the freezer and repay the cost monthly, as income levels permit. The program will be ongoing for as long as there is demand for freezer purchases. The freezer purchase fund, renewed by repayments, continues to be available for future purchases. Nutrition and food preservation information and education will complement the program.

Goals:

- To make the purchase of freezers more accessible to northern citizens, organizations and food businesses.
- To offer and provide nutrition and food preservation education to citizens accessing the freezer purchase program.

Outcomes:

- Northern citizens and organizations take advantage of bulk purchase of nutritious foods at lower/sale prices and store them in their freezer.
- Northern citizens and organizations make better use of garden or greenhouse produce as well as local meat supplies.
- Northern food retailers upgrade their cooler and freezer equipment and better manage, store and display nutritious perishable foods in their store.
- Increased purchase and use of nutritious foods.

Program Components:

- Manitoba Hydro will be asked to work with northern organizations, MKO, MMF, and NACC to partner in designing, managing, administering, promoting and accounting for the freezer purchase program.
- Manitoba Hydro will be invited to provide the money for start-up funds for the Northern Freezer Purchase Program.
- Handling and distribution of the freezer to the customer could be done separately or cooperatively with local retailers, depending on the most cost effective way for the customer.
- All northern citizens, food retailers, and organizations such as school and community food programs will be eligible to apply, through a simple application procedure, to purchase, have delivered and establish a repayment plan for a freezer.
- Manitoba Hydro will be asked to provide food preservation and nutrition information and education to all participants in the freezer purchase program.
- Local community health and nutrition educators will be able to encourage and promote participation in the program and provide complimentary nutrition and health education.

Benefits:

- Easy and low cost solution for citizens, organizations and businesses to have a freezer available to them.
- Purchasing in larger quantities can help northerners to benefit when nutritious foods are sold at lower prices. This can result in increased quantities of nutritious perishable foods being brought in to the community by the retailer and sold at lower prices because of the increased volume of sales.
- Nutrition education and food preservation education helps families make the best use of the freezer.

- Food retailers can provide better quality perishable foods for sale in their stores.
- Support to prioritized strategic options Northern Greenhouse pilot project, Northern Gardens Initiatives, Northern Community Foods program and Northern Food Business Development programs.

Challenges:

- Promoting the availability of the Northern Freezer Purchase Program to all those who may wish to participate will require significant investment of time and energy by participating northern organizations.

Costs:

- A start-up fund of $200,000 (Manitoba Hydro) will be required to allow for approximately 600 northern citizens and three to four northern organizations or businesses to access the freezer purchase program in the first two years. Repayment programs will replenish the fund and allow for ongoing purchases, on a first-come-first-served basis in future years.
- Additional dollars will be needed to promote and administer the Northern Freezer Purchase Program on an ongoing basis.

Evaluation by Criteria and Guidelines: Northern Freezer Purchase Program

Immediate/ Intermediate/ Long-term	Specific Issue(s) Targeted/ Type of Benefit	Comm. Type that benefits	Comm. Need	Community-based components
Immediate	- high food prices - awareness of healthy foods - availability of nutritious foods - distribution costs - variability and differences in communities	All	Medium	- partnerships with northern organizations and Manitoba Hydro to design and deliver the program - promotion of the program requires community-based promotion and food preservation training

Holistic approach components	Meets Goal of: NDS, HCM, INAC, HC (FNIHB), MB Health, Nutrition/health, community	Ease of Implement./ Existing model or template	Estimated Cost of Implement. - start-up - maintain	Pilot Project – y/n - workable - sustainable Cautionary Notes
- use of partnerships - reaches all citizens in the north - education and awareness - community input: people choose to participate based on their own needs - individuals, groups and food retailers can participate	HCM INAC HC (FNIHB) Manitoba Health Nutrition/health Community	Not complex Tap into Manitoba Hydro's focus on energy and past experience in loan programs	Start-up at $200,000 Renewable ongoing funds through loan repayment	Workable based on program design and access by all northern citizens Sustainable based on loan repayments being honoured

Additional Strategic Option – Systems Factors: Northern 18-Month Food Mail Pilot Project (also a freight rate reduction option)

Description:

A pilot project in one remote community will test the effectiveness of a substantial transportation subsidy ($.30/kg) for a select list of nutritious foods. This subsidy would be through the Food Mail Program funded by INAC and Health Canada and has been found effective in remote communities in other provinces and Territories. The pilot project includes significant consumer education, food and nutrition surveys, plus price monitoring throughout the 18-month pilot.

Goals:

- To pilot test the Food Mail program, at a reduced freight cost to food retailers, in one northern remote community, preferably one that includes both a First Nations and NACC community.
- To introduce and test the procedure of using the Food Mail Program in Manitoba.
- To evaluate the direct benefit of this freight cost subsidy to the nutritional health of the citizens in this community.
- To gather community-based data related to food pricing and consumption patterns.
- Nutrition and health professionals will provide nutrition education and awareness programs to encourage customers to purchase the designated nutritious foods.

Outcomes:

- Increased customer choice to buy larger quantities of nutritious foods.
- Enhanced nutrition and food monitoring, education and awareness will occur in this same community.

Project Components:

- Community asset mapping will be used to identify a remote community's readiness to participate in the pilot project. The option to tap into the Northern Community-based profiles project would assist in this process.
- One remote (winter road access) Manitoba community will choose to participate in a Food Mail pilot project that includes:
  - The transportation subsidy rate of $.30 per kg (plus $.75 per parcel) for the Food Mail selected nutritious foods.
  - Baseline and follow-up nutrition surveys (24-hr diet recall and food frequency) with all women of childbearing age.
  - Baseline and follow-up surveys on food purchasing and food security with all households.
  - Regular (every four to six weeks) price and quality monitoring surveys throughout the pilot are completed by a local person who receives training and reimbursement by the pilot project to do so.
  - Nutrition education and awareness programming directly associated with the reduced price of nutritious foods.
  - Local food retailers participate as partners in the pilot.
  - The pilot community would be chosen based on need, community consultation and eagerness to participate.
- Work with Fred Hill, Food Mail Program, to develop the Food Mail protocol and procedures. One component will be for a ministerial request to come from the province.
- If appropriate, work with Faculty of Human Ecology Masters Program to hire a Masters student to study the effect of lower prices and a person's decision to choose and purchase nutritious foods.
- It may be reasonable to see a pilot begin in the 2003-2004 or the 2004-2005 fiscal year.

Partners:

- INAC provides the Food Mail Program support, co-ordination and base air transportation subsidy.
- Health Canada provides the additional funding for the pilot (funds are directed through INAC).
- Canada Post implements the freight procedures and subsidy for the customer.
- Regional Health Authority works with Health Canada, INAC and local schools to provide the targeted nutrition programming and awareness.
- The food retailer partners with the project by becoming a Food Mail customer, by making nutritious foods more available and visible, by supporting the food pricing and quality surveying, by participating and supporting the nutrition education and awareness campaign as is appropriate to do so.

Benefits:

- Choosing a remote community will allow the pilot to work in a Manitoba community where the transportation cost is one of the major reasons why the price of nutritious foods is high in the community. This community, itself, would benefit significantly from the pilot project.
- Expectation that there will be increased consumption of nutritious foods.
- Choosing a community that has a North West Company store, as a partner will help to integrate the importance of nutrition, health and well-being into the policies of the company which serves much of northern Manitoba. However, all food stores in the community will be invited/expected to participate in the pilot.
- Applying the holistic approach of subsidizing transportation costs for nutritious foods, and nutrition, price and food quality surveying with community education and awareness in a pilot project in Manitoba will allow for a successful impetus and model for other communities to use in the future whether or not Food Mail subsidy to $.30/kg remains in effect.
- Having the pilot project in Manitoba will facilitate the development of the Food Mail systems within Canada Post. This will make it easier for other communities to use Food Mail's regular subsidy, if appropriate.
- The difference between past recommendations for Manitoba to participate in the Food Mail program: this option identifies a pilot project for one remote community in Manitoba. In the past, all 19 remote communities were included in the proposal.

Challenges:

- Funding for Food Mail programs is determined annually and its future is not clear.
- Funding for the pilot project is yet to be committed.
- Should this pilot project be successful, there could be increased expectations for additional sites across the province.

Costs:

- INAC/Health Canada costs to be determined at a later date.
- Potential implication for the province to contribute the contract funds for the nutrition survey. An option would be for a staff person with Manitoba Health or the RHA to complete the nutrition survey as an in-kind contribution to the pilot project.

Evaluation by Criteria and Guidelines: Northern 18-Month Food Mail Pilot Project (also a freight rate reduction option)

Immediate/ Intermediate/ Long-term	Specific Issue(s) Targeted/ Type of Benefit	Comm. Type that benefits	Comm. Need	Community-based components
Immediate 2003	- high food prices - availability of nutritious foods - transportation cost - variability and differences in communities	RWA	H	- community consultation and choice to be involved - community nutrition, food choices, price and quality surveys - increased awareness about the Food Mail Program

Holistic approach components	Meets Goal of: NDS, HCM, INAC, HC (FNIHB), MB Health, Nutrition/health, community	Ease of Implement./ Existing model or template	Estimated Cost of Implement. - start-up - maintain	Pilot Project – y/n - workable - sustainable Cautionary Notes
- targets all people in community not specific groups - partnerships - existing resources - equity with other provinces for a pilot - nutrition education - community input by those impacted	HCM INAC HC (FNIHB) Nutrition/health Community Manitoba Health	Moderately complex - existing model	TBA provided by INAC Food Mail	Pilot – yes - workable based on two other community pilot experiences - Not sustainable – depends on federal government funding
		- perceived public and political support		Cautionary Notes: - only one community will benefit. Others may expect equity - fed government is not clear on future of Food Mail

Additional Strategic Option – Local Food Provision: Northern Livestock Production Pilot Projects

Description:

This option will pilot test the viability of livestock farming operations for remote and isolated communities. There is some history where farm animals have been raised for food in northern communities. However, there is a need for current information and research as to the viability of livestock operations such as chickens, eggs, rabbits, goats, beef, or pork, etc., in remote and isolated northern communities. In addition, issues related to animal slaughter and butchering, inspection, waste management, feed supply, etc., require investigation and innovative solutions. Two to three remote communities will choose to participate in this three to five year study and pilot project. Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives will facilitate the pilot by co-ordinating the research, providing technical expertise and working with the community to provide training, resources, and business planning and other support as needed. Additional resources will be needed and include: funding for research and gathering knowledge about new technologies and systems that will work in Manitoba's northern communities; a paid pilot project manager for each pilot site; technical and business management training and support; funding for capital and operational costs; training in animal slaughter, butchering, food safety and handling systems.

Goals:

- To determine which kind of livestock operations can be viable in northern remote and isolated communities.
- To develop best practises for community-based livestock operations, slaughter and handling in northern remote and isolated communities.

Outcomes:

- Livestock operations provide a local supply of meat for the community at a price lower than meat shipped in from the south.

Project Components:

- The process of community asset mapping will be used to identify community potential, challenges and development needs for participation in the small livestock pilot project.
- Based on the community asset mapping results, two to three remote northern communities will choose to participate in a livestock production pilot project to establish its viability as a sustainable way to provide a local meat food source for the community.
- Innovative and alternative production, slaughter and butchering methods, systems, business structures will be investigated and tested. Operations may be piloted for eggs, chickens, beef, rabbits, goat, or pork, etc. The historical knowledge and expertise about raising animals in northern Manitoba will be researched and used in the development of these new pilot projects.
- A livestock operation could be a community-owned and operated venture, perhaps a co-operative business structure or an owner-operated business, depending on the community's identified need.
- The new position with MAFRI, the Aboriginal Agricultural Initiatives Co-ordinator, will work with northern organizations such as MKO, Tribal Councils, MMF, NACC and community leaders to identify which communities will participate in the pilot project. This person will continue to provide community support and liaison for the pilot project and if successful, ongoing support to the operation.
- Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, Livestock Development and Diversification Section will require a Specialist to facilitate the pilot projects. This staff person will provide technical information, research and advice and will bring together a project team of community representatives, specialists from within MAFRI, other departments, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to provide information about new technologies and production methods, cost of production, food safety and handling, nutrition and health education and others as

needed. Currently, there is a gap in knowledge related to livestock production systems in northern Manitoba. MAFRI will dedicate sufficient time and resources to narrow this gap in knowledge and will co-ordinate the development of best practises guidelines for livestock operations in northern and remote Manitoba communities.

- Circumpolar, participating countries will be contacted for information on technologies and systems that have proven successful in northern climates.
- Community composting and waste management will be established and will be used for fertilizer and to enhance soils for gardening and/or greenhouses initiatives, should they exist in the community.
- Wherever practical and cost effective, livestock operations could grow, over time, to provide meat products for nearby communities.
- Best Practises and successful models/templates for livestock operations in the north will be developed and shared with other northern communities.
- Livestock production business planning, management and employee training will be provided for all participants in the pilot project.
- A School Initiated Course (SIC) high school credit, and possibly a technical education school program, will be developed in co-operation with Frontier School Division, Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre and other schools (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth approval required). These high school courses will educate and train youth on the production, business planning, business opportunities and management of livestock operations, as well as other northern food production and processing ventures, in the north. Youth will also be offered employment and apprenticeship opportunities to work in the livestock business.
- There is a natural tie to the 4-H youth food production, business and leadership skills program (see Northern Youth Leadership Training Initiative option).
- A funding source will be required to assist in the research, capitol and operational costs of this pilot. The pilot project is designed to aid in community food security, as well as economic development, and therefore should not be held to the strictest terms of cost analysis and profitability.
- Based on community identified need, the local food retailer can be encouraged to participate in the pilot. In this case, the goal will be for the livestock operation, slaughter and butchering businesses to produce the quantity and quality of meat supply required for sale in the store at a price lower than it costs to ship the product into the community.
- Regional Health Authorities, Food Retailers, as well as MMF, MKO, tribal councils, local schools, and community health workers and education staff will complement this initiative by providing community-based nutrition educational programs that build on choices related to locally grown, nutritious and quality products.
- Equipment repair and maintenance training will be needed to have skilled repair people trained and available locally to deal with the machines and technology of the greenhouse structure. This same technician could be trained and available for repair of local refrigeration and cooling systems. This can help to reduce operating costs of local food business and therefore have an impact on lowering food prices.

Partners:

- Community investment in the pilot project is essential and will require community investment of time, leadership, financial contributions, support and promotions.
- Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives will be asked to focus and provide livestock production expertise, liaison, best practises guidelines and producer support.
- Tribal Wi-Chi-Way-Win Capital Corporation provides agricultural and business loans to Aboriginal farmers and businesses. Other research and business development funds can be identified.

- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada will be invited to participate in the development and funding of the pilot project.
- Food retailers can participate in the pilot as the purchaser of the meat products and sale to the customer in the community at a price lower than what it costs to ship the food in from the south.
- Regional Health Authority staff, food retailers, local schools, and staff with MMF, NACC and local tribal council, will provide community-based nutrition education programs to compliment and promote the locally grown nutritious food.

Benefits:

- The viability of livestock production, slaughtering and butchering operations in northern Manitoba will be tested and proven or disproved.
- High quality and locally grown meat products will be available to the community.
- Economic and community development will enhance community pride, self-reliance and achievement.
- Involvement of youth increases their awareness of food production, employment and business opportunities, training and certification for involvement in food production.
- Inter-community trade may enhance the availability of locally grown nutritious foods in nearby communities.
- Community composting adds value to the community.

Challenges:

- Significant challenges and a lack of knowledge and expertise exist in the area of livestock production, slaughter and butchering in northern Manitoba. Some of these include: feed source and costs; animal shelter and handling systems; predators and flies/insect management; food safety and handling; meat regulations and inspections; veterinary services; livestock waste management; lack of knowledge, expertise and experience in meat production in northern communities and others.

Costs:

- Significant investment in costs related to researching, designing and building appropriate livestock production, slaughter and butchering operations in northern Manitoba. A cost analysis will need to be completed prior to funding application to appropriate agencies.
- Two to three pilot project manager salaries, expenses and training costs of about $120,000 per year.
- Ongoing operational costs until production and processing reaches a cost recovery level of sales to the local retail food store and/or neighbouring communities.
- Province of Manitoba to designate additional livestock specialist staffing and operational costs to co-ordinate the pilot project of about $100,000/year.

Evaluation by Criteria and Guidelines: Northern Livestock Production Pilot Projects

Immediate/ Intermediate/ Long-term	Specific Issue(s) Targeted/ Type of Benefit	Comm. Type that benefits	Comm. Need	Community-based components
Immediate	- availability of nutritious foods - high food prices - transportation costs - distribution costs - food production and processing - variability and differences in communities	RWA RA	Medium - other sources of meat and fish are available locally	- community choice and investment to participate - local ownership and/or manager of pilot - local training and support

Holistic approach components	Meets Goal of: NDS, HCM, INAC, HC (FNIHB), MB Health, Nutrition/health, community	Ease of Implement./ Existing model or template	Estimated Cost of Implement. - start-up - maintain	Pilot Project – y/n - workable - sustainable Cautionary Notes
- partnerships, use existing resources - equity with southern livestock production support and services - nutrition education and awareness - economic development - local youth employment and education - community input as to livestock produced, business structure and method of sale/distribution	NDS HCM INAC HC (FNIHB) Manitoba Health Nutrition/health Community	Moderately complex: - new dollars needed - technology models exist in other jurisdictions - requires substantial skill training and support Politically acceptable Publicly acceptable – where the community supports the concept. Some concern about the feasibility of livestock production in the north to be determined in a systematic and community-based process	- high start-up costs related to research and production and processing systems - ongoing operational costs should become cost-recovery over time	Pilot project - yes - workable and sustainable based on government's investment in research, best practises, and ongoing support. Also community capacity and desire to participate

Additional Strategic Option: For further study and consideration: Food Cost Rebate Options – Consumer Rebate or Incentive; Northern Healthy Foods Rewards Program

Description:

North West Company has developed and is implementing a Healthy Living Products program for their Nunavut stores. This program encourages the purchase of healthy living products with a reward based on volume of sales benefiting the local school. Frontier School Division has developed a comprehensive Healthy Food Policy for all schools in the division. In addition, the province is undergoing the development of a Healthy Schools Policy. Frontier has expressed interest in partnering with food retailers in northern Manitoba to provide fundraisers and enticements to make healthy food choices. This option encourages the two agencies to open discussions about a nutritious food reward program in northern Manitoba Schools. This can provide a model/template for other food retailers and schools to implement a healthy food rewards program for their communities.

Goals:

- To facilitate the partnership between northern schools and local food retailers in the promotion of nutritious food purchases.

Outcomes:

- Increased purchase of nutritious foods by consumers in northern communities.
- Over time, the retail price of nutritious foods will be lower because of increased volume of sales.

Content:

- North West Company and Frontier School Division Board would work together to develop a school reward system that would promote the division's healthy food policy.
- The reward system could be similar to the one established in Nunavut:
    - Schools encourage healthy food purchases through education and the promotion of the Healthy Food Reward program.
    - The Healthy Food Reward program would also be promoted through an in-store promotional and signage campaign. Eligible nutritious foods will be clearly marked for consumers to see.
    - A change to the store's point of sale system may be necessary to allow these store receipts to show total healthy food choices purchased.
    - All community members and students would be encouraged to turn in their receipts to the local school.
    - By remitting proof of healthy food choices, the school would obtain rewards in the form of nutritious foods and related merchandise. Rewards earned would be determined by the amount of receipts remitted.
- Another potential model exists with the Flin Flon Pharmasave business and its rewards program with local schools:
    - At the point of sale, the customer names the school to which their reward points are given.
    - The retailer's till and accounting system records and tallies all reward points for each participating school.
    - The retailer provides the appropriate rewards to the schools.
- Other retailers (such as IGA) have a similar program in place in southern Manitoba.
- Frontier School Division will be encouraged to work with North West Company to develop the logistics and policies needed to implement a reward program. Local school community committees would then work with local food stores to promote and implement the program.
- Local health and nutrition educators will work with both the northern store and the school to enhance the nutrition and healthy living messages to the community.

- Based on evaluation and success of this type or reward program, other schools and divisions will be invited to participate in the reward program. The Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre would be asked to assist in the design and promotion of the program in First Nation schools and their local food retailers.
- Prices of nutritious food products will not be increased to accommodate the cost of implementing the reward program and in fact, as volume of sales increase, the price of the nutritious foods should decrease.
- Province of Manitoba recognizes and promotes the Healthy Rewards program and acknowledges the contributions made by the retailers and the schools.

Partners:

- North West Company head office and individual stores.
- Frontier School Division Board and local community committees.
- Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre.
- Other food retailers and schools.
- Local health and nutrition educators.
- Province of Manitoba recognizes and supports the program.

Benefits:

- Increased purchases and consumption of nutritious foods in the community. Increased volume of sales can result in lower prices overall for customers.
- Local school benefits from the reward program.
- Food retailers are recognized for their community support, contribution to schools and support to community healthy living.
- Local health and nutrition educators have an additional tool to use in promoting healthy and nutritious food choices to combat obesity, diabetes and heart health.

Challenges:

- Jurisdictional differences in reaching all schools in northern Manitoba.
- Application of a rewards program by smaller, independent food retailers may be challenging.

Costs:

- Costs to North West Company to design and implement the reward program.
- Costs for other food retailers to implement the reward program locally.
- Province of Manitoba may wish to invest some dollars in promoting and acknowledgement of participants and the program.

Evaluation by Criteria and Guidelines: Northern Healthy Foods Rewards Program

Immediate/ Intermediate/ Long-term	**Specific Issue(s) Targeted/ Type of Benefit**	**Comm. Type that benefits**	**Comm. Need**	**Community-based components**
Immediate	- high food prices - availability of nutritious foods - awareness of healthy foods and lifestyle choices	All	High	- community-based participation - direct benefit to schools through increased purchase of nutritious foods

Holistic approach components	**Meets Goal of: NDS, HCM, INAC, HC (FNIHB), MB Health, Nutrition/health, community**	**Ease of Implement./ Existing model or template**	**Estimated Cost of Implement. - start-up - maintain**	**Pilot Project – y/n - workable - sustainable Cautionary Notes**
- school, retailer and nutrition program partnerships - youth education and participation - community input	HCM HC Manitoba Health Nutrition/health Community	Moderately complex – requiring retailer co-operation and changes to their tills and accounting systems	Retailer costs to design and implement Ongoing retailer costs to support school rewards	Workable – based on significant acknowledgement and recognition of retailer's contribution to community Important to have nutrition and health educators plus schools providing support and nutrition education programs complimenting the rewards program

For further study and consideration: Food Cost Rebate Options – Consumer Rebate or Incentive: Northern Nutritious Food Rebate Program

Description:

Northern families who are eligible for the Healthy Baby, Baby First and Early Start provincial programs would be able to receive coupons that can be used to purchase nutritious foods at their local food store. The target group includes pregnant and breastfeeding women and families with children under six years. There will also be food and nutrition education activities that go along with the nutritious food rebate. The nutritious food coupon would be used just like a cheque when the customer pays for the nutritious foods. This would require a partnership with the food retailer, its banking institution and the provincial and federal governments.

Goals:

- To provide a direct subsidy to pregnant and nursing women and families with children under the age of six in northern remote communities for the purchase of nutritious foods.
- To evaluate the impact of a nutritious food rebate, and therefore lower cost, on the family's decision to purchase more nutritious foods.
- To evaluate the impact of a nutritious foods rebate on the increased volume of sales and consequent price of these foods to all community members.

Outcomes:

- Targeted families purchase increased quantities of nutritious foods.
- Long-term health improvements for participating families.

Program Content:

- Based on community desire and support, a northern nutritious food rebate program can be implemented in the community. A process of asset mapping with community service providers, leaders and citizens will occur to determine community participation.
- The northern nutritious food rebate program could be implemented in northern remote communities only since the burden of high costs for nutritious foods is significantly higher in these communities.
- Customers could receive a government-supported rebate to use for the purchase of nutritious foods at their local food store. The amount of subsidy will differ amongst the three different types of communities because the need is different in remote communities without all-weather roads, remote communities with all-weather roads and major northern centres.
- A targeted list of nutritious foods including foods from the milk, fruits, vegetables, meat and whole grains food groups will qualify for the rebate. Currently, milk and/or milk coupons are distributed through the provincial Healthy Child programs. The federally-funded Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP) is available for on-reserve women, based on the community decision to provide the program. The CPNP also offers coupons for a variety of foods such as milk, juice, fruit and crackers, etc.
- The targeted list of foods will be developed and approved by northern citizens to ensure the most appropriate foods qualify. Current nutritious foods lists such as those approved by Frontier School Division Healthy Food Policy, Food Mail, Northern Nutritious Food Basket, etc., can be used as a base for identifying the qualifying foods. Consideration will be given to products that provide options for customers with lactose intolerance and to appropriate infant formulas.
- The rebate program will be designed in co-operation with food retailers and potential customers to ensure ease of implementation for food retailers, customers and government. The rebate program could model one that has been implemented by the U.S. *Women, Infants and Children* (WIC) program.

Components may include:

- Eligibility for the rebate program would be through the Healthy Baby, Baby First and Early Start program participants.
- Investigation of how (and if) Elders who may be vulnerable and in need of this nutrition program could be included.
- The rebate product can be used like a cheque in the retail system but can only be used to pay for the specific nutritious foods. In the WIC program, the cashier treats the rebate as a cheque. The items are totalled, the amount hand written on the rebate, the cashier runs the rebate through the till the same as any cheque. The food retailer then deposits the rebate with the bank deposit. The bank treats the rebate as a cheque and credits the retailer's account and forwards the rebate to the government agency for reimbursement. North West Company in Alaska has experience with the WIC Rebate program and has indicated they would be more than willing to participate in the development and delivery of a similar program in Manitoba. North West Company has indicated that such a program, with or without the use of banks, would participate in the accountability and monitoring systems. More information about the program can be found on the web site: www.fns.usda.gov/wic/ProgramInfo/WICataglance.htm

- Healthy Child Manitoba would manage, coordinate and evaluate the northern nutritious food rebate program and will receive new government funds to do so. Tying the administration of this new northern nutritious food rebate program to existing Healthy Child Manitoba programs makes the program customer friendly and reduces the need for new bureaucracies and systems.
- A pilot project would be implemented in two to three northern remote communities to evaluate the process and to determine the need and level of subsidy that may be offered in each of the three different types of communities. It is assumed that more remote and isolated communities with the highest retail food prices would require a larger per-person rebate. Consideration will be given regarding existing food subsidies currently offered by Healthy Child Manitoba and Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program.
- It is important to note that, if a rebate program is implemented, it must be done so with a longer term plan. The client and service providers need to know that the program exists and that it will be supported for a defined period of time.
- Northern nutritious food rebate program would be funded on a cost-shared basis with the provincial and federal governments.
- The rebate to customers will not be clawed back by any provincial, federal or municipal levels of government income and/or social assistance programs currently in existence. It is clearly established that this rebate is a nutrition program.
- All northern citizens who qualify through Healthy Baby, Baby First and Early Start will qualify for the Northern Nutritious Food Rebate Program. Extra efforts would be needed to promote and encourage on-reserve women/families to participate in either this initiative and/or the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program.
- An added benefit to northern communities is that by encouraging increased volume of sales for these nutritious foods, there is the potential, over time, for lower prices for everyone in the competitive retail pricing of nutritious foods.
- Existing nutrition and health staff and programs with RHA's, Healthy Child Manitoba, MMF, Northern Association of Community Councils, MKO, Tribal Councils, Frontier School Division Healthy Food Policy Leads, Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre and other agencies will be asked to promote and apply the rebate program. It will be a valuable tool to integrate into ongoing nutrition education and awareness programs as well.
- These professional staff will also be asked to assist in assessing the rebate program in relation to increased nutritious food choices and clarification that the correct foods are on the rebate list.

- On all written tools or materials for the rebate program, quick and easy nutrition information will be part of the message.
- Participating food retailers will be recognized and acknowledged for their role in helping to make nutritious foods more accessible in their community.
- Food retailers would participate in clearly marking the eligible foods and promoting the program to customers.
- The rebate program will be evaluated as to its effectiveness in helping to reduce the retail cost of nutritious foods to program participants and the community as a whole.

Partners:

- Community leadership and northern organizations will determine applicability of the rebate program on a community-by-community basis.
- Healthy Child Manitoba and related programs and staff – Healthy Baby, Baby First and Early Start – will manage, administer, evaluate, and co-fund the program.
- INAC and/or Health Canada (FNIHB) will be invited to contribute to the program design and co-funding of the rebate costs.
- Northern Food Retailers and their banking institutions will contribute to program design and will adapt their technology and systems as needed to participate in the program.
- Community-based health and nutrition educators will compliment the rebate program with nutrition education and awareness of nutritious food choices.

Benefits:

- The rebate focuses on the province's prioritized target audience for nutrition education and disease prevention, all pregnant and nursing women and all families with children under the age of six years.
- This targeted group of northern citizens will receive a food subsidy to help them purchase nutritious foods for their families. A possibility to include Elders will be investigated.
- Increased volume of sales of nutritious foods may result in lower prices for these specific foods for all citizens in the northern community.
- A new rebate program is integrated into existing health and nutrition targeted programs thereby making the program easier for the client to access plus achieving administrative efficiencies.
- Co-funding between two levels of government helps to share the financial burden of reducing the cost of nutritious foods to northern citizens.
- Local health and nutrition educators have an additional tool to use in promoting healthy and nutritious food choices to combat obesity, diabetes and heart health.
- Local food retailers are recognized for their community support and contribution to community healthy living.

Challenges:

- Federal policy related to implementing programs nationally restricts involvement in a one-province-only initiative.
- Jurisdictional barriers in reaching all northern citizens.
- Unknown costs to government at this time. Northern demographics show a growing and young population.
- This program does not assist diabetics who have special dietary needs and challenges in the north.

Costs:

- Administrative costs to food retailers to adjust technology and systems to participate.
- Costs to provincial and federal governments – to be determined at a later date and verified through the pilot project stage.

Note: Other suggestions made by stakeholders about this option include:

- Seniors Directorate (reaching Elders and seniors).
- Foster care programs to assist foster parents.
- Using northern living allowance as a calculation to determining level of rebate supports.
- Community determines who would be eligible for the rebate.
- Child tax credit participants could determine participants.
- An Aboriginal business could be started up to develop the program stickers and promotional items.
- Eligibility criteria must be clear, defined and unbiased.
- Could be piloted in a remote community (Brochet) and less remote community (Cormorant, Moose Lake).

Evaluation by Criteria and Guidelines: Northern Nutritious Food Rebate Program

Immediate/ Intermediate/ Long-term	Specific Issue(s) Targeted/ Type of Benefit	Comm. Type that benefits	Comm. Need	Community-based components
Intermediate	- high food prices - lactose intolerance and acceptance of milk - availability of nutritious foods - variability and differences in communities	All		- northern representation on program design - community choice to participate - purchase foods locally

Holistic approach components	Meets Goal of: NDS, HCM, INAC, HC (FNIHB), MB Health, Nutrition/health, community	Ease of Implement./ Existing model or template	Estimated Cost of Implement. - start-up - maintain	Pilot Project – y/n - workable - sustainable Cautionary Notes
- partnerships - use existing resources - nutrition and healthy choices education - focus on children - community input	HCM HC (FNIHB) Nutrition goals Community	Moderately complex: Multi-party; new program design; new money required Models exist for both on and off reserve coupons Political and public acceptability?		Pilot project - yes Initial pilot tests for new program design and verification of costs As a pilot for one to two years, administrative and partnership issues can be tested and modified as needed Sustainability depends on ongoing government funding and/or increased volumes of nutritious foods sold and thereby lower prices

For further study and consideration: Food Cost Rebate Options – Consumer Rebate or Incentive: Northern Nutritious Food Retail Incentive

Description:

Northern food retailers will be encouraged to sell a select list of nutritious foods at lower prices and will receive an incentive based on increased volume of sales. The incentive would be a combination of a financial incentive from government plus an equipment/merchandise incentive from participating food wholesalers and processors.

Goals:

- Food retailers will receive an incentive to increase the amount of nutritious foods they sell by lowering their price to the consumer and by promoting these lower prices.
- Nutrition and health professionals will provide nutrition education and awareness programs to encourage customers to purchase these designated foods.
- An improved list of nutritious foods will be sold at lower retail food prices in the community.

Outcomes:

- Increased volume of sales of nutritious foods result in lower retail food prices in the community, over time.

Content:

Government Incentive

- Food retailers would be encouraged to sell nutritious food products at as low a price as possible. This can be done by lowering prices, by participating in in-store nutrition and food tasting campaigns and by improving the display and presentation of nutritious foods. The purpose is to build up the volume of sales for these foods, which can reduce vendor costs and allow for lower nutritious food prices to become the norm.
- Increased volume of sales may also be achieved by participating in the Northern Healthy Foods Rewards Program option and with schools and their healthy food policy.
- A process of community asset mapping by community leaders, food retailers and health professionals will identify the community need and interest in participating in the Incentive.
- Food retailers, then, can apply to the government of Manitoba or INAC if serving a First Nations community, for an incentive/rebate. The financial incentive is offered based on an increase in the volume of sales of a selected list of nutritious foods. Accountability procedures will be established that will require minimal disruption to the retailers, business procedures and government bureaucracy.
- Qualifying nutritious foods in northern Manitoba would be identified by Manitoba Health, FNIHB, RHA nutritionists/dieticians, Aboriginal health educators and northern food retailers. The list of nutritious foods could very well be similar to the one used in Frontier School Division's Healthy Food Policy, the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Nutritious Northern Food Basket or Food Mail's nutritious food priority list.
- Local health and nutrition educators will work with food retailers to provide nutrition education, food preparation and tasting demonstrations, market displays, and other activities. This will support the purchase of nutritious foods by consumers and will encourage food retailers to improve the quality and appeal of nutritious foods, as needed.
- Local store managers will require program and nutrition education, then can partner with community educators and work with schools to help augment healthy food policies such as those implemented by Frontier School Division.
- This retail incentive could be introduced gradually into the community by staging in the qualifying nutritious foods one at a time.

- Retailers would provide invoices, receipts and sales data to show the difference between their actual costs and the price at which the nutritious foods were sold.
- The agency to administer the government component of the incentive/rebate is yet to be determined, possibly Consumer's Bureau.
- A system of regular food price monitoring would be necessary to ensure food prices are not negatively affected by this incentive program. See Northern Food Price Survey Program option.
- A provincial government staff person, possibly with Consumer's Bureau, would dedicate sufficient work time to work with a provincial committee to design, implement and evaluate the incentive program.
- Government's role: to facilitate the incentive program; help to mobilize the complimentary community and school education program; provide a segment of the incentive to the retailer; and monitor the long-term effect of the incentive on the retail price of nutritious foods.

Industry Incentive

- There is some history whereby northern food stores co-operated with General Foods and received an industry incentive to do so.
- Interested food processors, wholesalers, and equipment suppliers will be invited to develop and participate in an industry incentive to northern food retailers. The incentive will be based on increased sales of the selected nutritious foods. Retailers will qualify for incentives such as refrigeration or other retail store equipment, lower case costs for nutritious foods, reduced freight costs, etc.
- There is some history of large food companies such as General Foods, providing incentives/grants to assist food retailers in delivering nutritious foods in northern communities.
- Here is an example of how industry may be interested in participating with an incentive. Companies who process and/or sell UHT milk, powdered milk or milk crystals would plan, organize and fund an in-store taste testing program of their product in northern food stores. The company would hire northern people (perhaps through a summer student employment program) to work with local food retailers and/or community groups. In-store taste testing of these various alternatives to fluid milk could result in increased volume of sales and therefore trigger an incentive to the retailer. An added benefit to the consumer would be a lower cost for milk if the new product proves to be acceptable in taste and quality.

A provincial committee would determine what nutritious foods qualify for the incentive/rebate. The committee would also determine the amount of incentive/rebate for which a retailer qualifies based on their increased volume of sales. This incentive/rebate would be based on community input and available statistics on disposable income. The committee would include representatives from Manitoba Family Services and Housing, Healthy Child Manitoba, Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, MKO, MMF, NACC, Frontier School Division, Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre, North West Company, Arctic Co-operatives Ltd., industry stakeholders.

Partners:

- Committee participants: Manitoba Family Services and Housing, Healthy Child Manitoba, Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, MKO, MMF, Frontier School Division, North West Company, Arctic Co-operatives Ltd., participating industry stakeholders.
- Consumer's Bureau will be asked to administer the program.
- Food retailers willing to participate in the incentive program and associated paperwork and procedures.

Benefits:

- Selected nutritious foods will be sold at reduced prices in all participating food stores.

- Food retailers are included in the program design, which will help to reduce inefficiencies and added costs to implement in the food stores.
- Representatives from northern communities are involved in the development of the listing of nutritious foods and volume of sales that qualify for the incentive.
- This option could be used as an interim measure for three to five years until other more sustainable options for lower food prices are implemented.

Challenges:

- Significant community level support needed for the incentive to be successful.
- Monitoring and control needed to ensure nutritious food prices are lowered to benefit the consumer.
- Trust factor of all participants will need to be high.

Costs:

- Significant program costs to set up, administer and provide the nutritious retail food incentive to all northern communities. A detailed analysis of structure and projected costs would be required prior to the decision to implement this program.
- Provincial and federal cost share funding for the government incentive portion would need to be negotiated.
- Costs associated with regular nutritious food price monitoring will be required. See Northern Food Price Survey Program option.

Evaluation by Criteria and Guidelines: Northern Nutritious Food Retail Incentive

Immediate/ Intermediate/ Long-term	Specific Issue(s) Targeted/ Type of Benefit	Comm. Type that benefits	Comm. Need	Community-based components
Intermediate	- high food prices	All		- participation in program design - local food retail participation

Holistic approach components	Meets Goal of: NDS, HCM, INAC, HC (FNIHB), MB Health, Nutrition/health, community	Ease of implement./ Existing model or template	Estimated Cost of Implement. - start-up - maintain	Pilot Project – y/n - workable - sustainable Cautionary Notes
- partnerships - all citizens - community input	HCM HC (FNIHB) Nutrition/health Community Manitoba Health	Complex Publicly acceptable in the north but not in the south Politically sensitive to subsidize private industry	Unknown	Sustainable – ongoing government funding required Could be used as an interim measure until other solutions that bring the actual price down are implemented Cautionary Note: Significant funding costs are expected

Committee Decision-making Tool

Political acceptability	Public acceptability	Ability to overcome barriers/challenges of implementation	Ease of implementation	Community input and consultation prior to implementation	Holistic approach to issues	Impact on all issues related to food prices	Longer term impact on retail price of food	Immediate impact on retail price of food	Greatest impact at lowering retail price of food	Impact/Includes both First Nation and non-FN people	Targeted to other remote or isolated communities	Targeted to communities with highest food prices (winter roads/fly-in)		Priority	Total	**Strategic Option** **Impact:** 5 Greatest 4 3 Moderate 2 1 Least Note: The Total represents an average of 12 individual steering committeee participant evaluations of each proposed option.
														7	37	Northern Nutritous Food Rebate Program
														9	36	Northern Healthy Foods Rewards Program
														8	37	Northern Youth Leadership Training Initiative
														4	39	Northern community Foods Program
														1	47	Northern Self-Sufficiency Re-Discovery/Awareness Initiative
														3	44	Northern Food Business Development
														4	42	Northern Greenhouse Pilot Project
														5	41	Northern Garden Initiative
														8	37	Northern Country/ Wild Foods Program
														7	38	Northern Two-Year Food Mail Pilot Project
														2	45	Milk Price Review in Northern Communities
														6	40	Northern Food Price Survey Program
														10	30	Northern Freight Rate Reduction Options
														5	41	Northern Nutritious Food Retail Incentive
														7	39	Northern Freezer Purchase Program
														9	36	Northern Livestock Production Option